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DRAMATIC EPISODES.

DRAMATIC EPISODES

BY

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Author of "Modern Monologues"

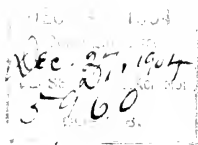


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DRAMATIC EPISODES

A COURT COMEDY.

A PLAY IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS:

Charles II of England.

Lady Francis Stuart, a Lady-in-Waiting.

Nell Gwynn.

SETTING.—Ante room in the Palace, furnished in the period. Up stage, center, a curtained door. Up stage, left, a small table with decanter and glasses. A bell rope hangs from left corner of ceiling. Down, right, a heavy carved bench. Down, left front, a writing table strewn with writing materials. R. 2 E., a door. Room is lighted with candles.

NOTE.—Nell Gwynn speaks with slight Irish accent.

Discovered—Lady Stuart—on couch, head in hand. She sighs.

LADY S. Oh I am so weary of it all—so utterly weary. The jealousy—the gossip; the petty intrigue of the court—Life is at its ugliest here! [*Tenderly.*] And the Queen—our poor unloved, yet loving Queen, each day she wrings my heart dry of pity! The King—bah! [*Rises and goes to table.*] Richmond—Richmond, I pray the wars may soon be over, and you may come and take me away from this place—soon—soon!

[*Enter—the King stealthily at back—looking about as if in fear of pursuit. Lady S. does not hear nor see him.*]

KING S. Pensive, ma belle Stuart?

LADY S. [*Alarmed.*] Sire! [*She courtesys, eyes on him.*]

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KING. Not "Sire" to those we *love*, my Lady—they call us Charles!

LADY S. [*Coldly.*] Your Majesty doth honor me too much! [*King laughs, goes down right, tosses hat on bench.*]

KING. You give us a royal welcome, Stuart, quite a royal welcome! One of the difficulties of Kings, Milady, is the impossibility of doing anything alone. We go always with a pack of courtiers snarling at our heels. [*Saunters up stage, and looks off.*] But this time, methinks, we have escaped them. Oddsfish—the temptation had to be great to warrant our taking that trouble. Well, [*Comes toward her slowly.*] t'was great enough. A man would do much for a word alone with thee.

LADY S. [*Moving away.*] I thought that your Majesty was at the Council at this hour.

KING. Council? Gods-eye—is a man never to have a minute to call his own? The affairs of England—they bore me! I'd rather turn my attention to—affairs of the heart!

LADY S. England's affairs should be the affairs of your heart, Sire, and of your head too.

KING. You preach to me, too, do you? You'd teach me to play the part of King? Leave that to my ministers, fair Stuart, and you teach me—sweeter things!

LADY S. [*Evasively.*] They do say duty's sweet, Sire!

KING. [*Annoyed.*] Sire! Sire! Will you drop the King and turn your attention to the man?

LADY S. Nay—Sire—that would be treason.

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[*Lady S. goes to table, and King sits on bench at right.*]

KING. I see you're bound to preach to me. Well, you've given me the first duty of a sovereign—what's the first duty of a subject, fair young judge?

LADY S. To love England—and the King, Sire.

KING. [*Leans toward her.*] Ah—now we come to an interesting point. Are you a good subject, Lady Stuart? Do you love your King?

LADY S. Why—I—I hope so, Sire.

KING. [*Springs up—speaks explosively.*] Hope so! Egad, Milady, I'll have you up for treason! Protest a bit, for pity's sake, and swear you love your King with all your heart, you lovely traitor. [*Imitates her.*] I—faith—she hopes she loves her King! Madame, must I do the protesting? Oddsfish, I'll teach thee warmth!

LADY S. You can't kindle warmth, where there is no fire.

KING. What mean you by that, Madame?

LADY S. I leave that to your Majesty's wit!

KING. [*Warmly.*] Then I'll build the fire, and blow it with my love as bellows. For by my troth, I love thee well, ice-maiden! [*He goes behind table and leans over her shoulder, face close to hers, arms half about her. She goes quickly center.*]

LADY S. [*Hotly.*] Sire—you would insult me—!

KING. [*Leans on table, laughing.*] Faith, Madame, the King's love is an insult most of my courtiers would brook in patience!

LADY S. And there I differ from most of your

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Majesty's court, and I say again, you insult her Majesty the Queen, as well as me. [*Grimly.*] I would not rival her Grace of Cleveland, nor the Duchess of Portsmouth, Sire—I leave them to contend for your royal favors!

KING. [*Angrily.*] You go far!

LADY S. [*Angrily.*] Then your Majesty goes farther!

KING. Oddsfish, Stuart, I like your spirit! Can nothing touch that heart of yours? Look—see—[*Drops on knee.*] your Sovereign on his knees! [*Stuart looks about in alarm, then bends over him.*]

LADY S. Sire—Sire—I beg of you rise. Suppose someone should see you thus! Think of me—think of yourself—think of England!

KING. [*Half jestingly.*] Here I stay until you say “Charles—I love you!”

LADY S. [*Finally.*] Then there you stay till the crack of doom—and after. [*King springs up and faces her.*]

KING. What? You refuse my favors? You dare to thwart me, Stuart? What do you mean by it—what's your reason? Am I old? Am I ugly? Ah—I see—you love some one else. Well, let that man beware! You don't trample on the King of England without consequence, Madame. Who is he? Out with it. Buckhurst? Off he goes! No—Buckingham? Well, even Buckingham shall suffer for it!

LADY S. [*Coldly.*] Your Majesty is hasty at conclusions. These gentlemen are nothing to me!

KING. Who is he, then—who is he? I shall not stir from this place till I've had it from you.

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Ah—ha—now I remember the incident of the garden. So its Richmond—is it? Well, here's a kettle of fish! We'll settle with him. But t'other day a pretty lady asked for his recall, and now we'll have him running back to court!

LADY S. [*Alarmed.*] Sire—I beg of you—

KING. Ah—the ice-maiden melts!

LADY S. [*Coldly.*] Your Majesty is quite wrong!

KING. [*Hotly.*] Madame—the king can do no wrong! I'll sign the papers for Richmond's recall this night—

LADY S. Sire—Sire! [*King strides to door up center, turns angrily.*]

KING. Sire me no Sires, Madame—and let that man beware! [*Goes out. Stuart follows him up stage and stands staring after him as if dazed.*]

LADY S. What have I done? Richmond—I've ruined us both by this! What shall I do? To whom can I go? Ah—yes—the Queen—[*Starts as if to go out, then stops.*] in any other trouble, yes—but now. I cannot say to her the King has—Oh, Richmond must not come here. If the King discovers we do love—there is no telling what he may do to humiliate us! Cleveland? Portsmouth? Ah, no, I cannot. [*Sudden inspiration.*] Gwynn! Nell Gwynn—they say the player girl has the king upon a string. I wonder—well, I can but try. [*Goes to table, and writes rapidly.*]
Nell Gwynn—Royal Theater, London.

Dear Madame—

Will you come to my apartments to-night after the play, on a matter of urgent business?

FRANCES STUART.

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[*Looks at clock.*] It may be too late even now. [*Goes up stage and pulls rope. Enter Page.*] A note for Mistress Nell Gwynn of the Royal Theater, at the end of the next street. A fat purse for you if you get her here within the hour. Haste now. [*Page runs out. She watches him, then turns front.*] That I—Frances Stuart—with royal blood in my veins, should have to humble myself to this Irish jade from the gutter! [*Tenderly.*] Ah—Richmond, forgive me—it's little enough to do for you—dear heart! If she'll only use her influence with the King! Well—she must—I'll make her. She must never know I'm asking a favor of her—I'll make her think the favor is all mine. [*Disgust.*] Oh, this court of England—where there is danger in a glance—a handclasp—where true love is treason—it's penalty—disgrace! [*She sits on bench.*]

VOICE WITHOUT. Never mind—I'll announce meself!

LADY S. What? My messenger so soon?

[*Enter Nell Gwynn. She stops, looks about, sees Lady S. and sails down toward her, head in the air. Courtesys low.*]

GWYNN. Lady Frances Stuart, I suppose? I met your man outside the theater—this letter tells me, ye have business with me!

LADY S. [*Inspecting her.*] You are Nell Gwynn the player, are you not? [*Gwynn draws herself up, and inspects Stuart.*]

GWYNN. Mistress Eleanor Gwynn—at your service! May I ask to what I owe the honor of this interview?

LADY S. [*Intensely.*] You see I had to get

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you here somehow—[*Gwynn's interrogatory glance causes her to catch herself lightly.*] I—I've always had some idle curiosity about you, Mistress Gwynn. [*Gwynn looks at her indignantly, then laughs.*]

GWYNN. [*Low mocking courtesy.*] Proud to fill your ladyship's idle moments—quite fair, I'm sure, for I regret to say, your Ladyship's filled some of mine.

STUART. I—I've always wondered how you looked off the stage?

GWYNN. [*Laughs, marches front.*] Well—what do ye think of me?

LADY S. I'm pleasantly surprised.

GWYNN. [*Aside.*] She grants me looks—I'm prepared for war! [*To Stuart.*] May I ask what ye ixpected?

LADY S. Irish face—red hair—snub nose!

GWYNN. [*Laughs loudly.*] Well, methinks, Milady, that I've got them all! [*Seriously.*] Ah—I see—'tis that I've got more of them than ye ixpected. Lady Stuart, I'm generously endowed by Nature. I grant ye, I've none of your beauty that's only skin deep—my beauty is within—I've a fine, large capacious heart!

LADY S. Capacious—so I've heard. Big enough for half the kingdom.

GWYNN. Half the kingdom—well—that's big enough for all the men.

LADY S. Ah, yes, the men. One hears such tales about you!

GWYNN. [*Takes center.*] Doesn't one? Faith—'tis all I can do to recognize meself by the portrait Rumor paints of me!

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LADY S. I suppose you know almost everyone at court, Mistress Gwynn? [*She motions to chair—Gwynn drags it center and sits.*]

GWYNN. [*Nods.*] By reputation—or the lack of it!

LADY S. I hear that all the men are at your feet.

GWYNN. Men—did ye say, Lady Stuart? There are few enough men at court. I think of three—Buckingham—Buckhurst—Richmond. The rest are courtiers, fops and fools!

LADY S. [*Laughs satirically.*] 'Tis well you make that speech behind his Majesty's back.

GWYNN. Faith, Madame, I've made it often enough to his face!

LADY S. And what said his Majesty to that?

GWYNN. [*Laughs, drags chair back to table.*] Well, to be exact he said—"Odds—fish, my heart, in the kingdom of the witless—the half wit is a King." [*Lady S. joins reluctantly in Gwynn's mirth.*]

LADY S. [*Watching her closely.*] They tell me you and the King are great—friends! [*Gwynn comes center, speaking sincerely.*]

GWYNN. Then they tell you true, Milady, for the King has no truer friend, nor more loyal subject than Nell Gwynn! [*Stuart rises, crosses, as if in doubt.*]

LADY S. And the King loves you? [*Gwynn shoots glance at her, hesitating whether to resent remark—then laughs.*]

GWYNN. So he says—more fool he. You see, my Lady, it's like this. Now I'm the only honest rascal in the kingdom. The rest spend all

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their time play-actin'. I spend my nights play-actin'—but the rest of the time I'm meself—just plain Nell Gwynn—I go where I will, do what I wist—and the Divil take the hindmost! [*Saunters up stage.*]

LADY S. [*Anxiously.*] You have some—influence with the King? [*Gwynn turns and looks at her keenly.*]

GWYNN. Ye certainly are well informed. [*Suddenly.*] Are ye in love with the King yourself?

LADY S. Heaven forbid!

GWYNN. That's what I say! Poor Charles, ye'd freeze him to death with one of your looks! [*Shrewdly.*] They do say that his Majesty has an eye for you, Milady,—though I'm hanged if I see his reasons. [*Goes up stage again.* Lady S. *bursts out, agitatedly.*]

LADY S. Does the King trust you?

GWYNN. Trust me? Oh—as well as the next. I'm his chief advisor—he calls me “Lord Chamberlain.” But yesterday he said—“Lord Chamberlain, I'm tired to death and worn out tryin' to please the people of England—what shall I do?” And I said—“Sire—there's but one way left—sweep out all the women, and run this kingdom to suit yourself—and hang the first man that's not content.”

LADY S. As one of the women, you'd banish yourself! [*Gwynn prances front, strikes attitude.*]

GWYNN. Nay, Madame, I'm—I'm the Lord Chamberlain!

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LADY S. How does his Majesty brook Mistress Gwynn's other lovers?

GWYNN. Faith, they're mine, not his. I take good care of them.

LADY S. Buckingham, Pepys, Richmond—

GWYNN. Tilly—vally—don't ask for an inventory. I never was good at a memory.

LADY S. I suppose you've heard that Richmond is to be recalled and another put in his place in command?

GWYNN. [*Aside.*] Richmond again—so that's where the shoe pinches!

LADY S. [*Earnestly.*] It must be hard for Richmond, whose heart and strength are all the King's—it must be hard for Richmond to be called back, to gratify some woman—so 'tis said.

GWYNN. [*Surprise.*] Woman—who? Oh . . . now, I see.

LADY S. [*Hotly.*] Yes, a woman. Some traitor to England, and the King—bah—a reed in the wind!

GWYNN. [*Laughs.*] 'Tis well you make that speech behind his Majesty's back! [*Lady S. comes toward her.*]

LADY S. Mistress Gwynn, why don't you use your influence with the King for the good of England? Why don't you induce his Majesty to re-instate Richmond, and—

GWYNN. [*Laughingly interrupts.*] Faith—Madame, 'twas I that called him in! I dare not whiff round again, and send him out, or the chief advisor will be accused of instability. The King may be a reed, as you say, but the Lord Chamberlain must be a steady wind to blow him!

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LADY S. [*Astonished.*] You—you had Richmond recalled? He is one of your lovers then?

GWYNN. [*Aside.*] I begin to see light—the iceberg's jealous. Well, 'tis enough to say that I wanted him back for a scheme of me own! [*Lady S. turns on Gwynn in rage.*]

LADY S. Well, Madam, I suppose you'll sell your favors. I wish to buy your influence with the King. What sum will you name to induce him to reinstate the Duke of Richmond? Name your price—I'll pay you well! [*Gwynn starts toward her as if to strike her—stops center, both women angrily facing each other.*]

GWYNN. [*Bursts out.*] Oh—you fool—you great fool—you hussy! Buy me? [*Laughs harshly.*] Buy my influence with the King? Well, I may have been born in the gutter, but by my faith, I'll never stoop so low as this, great Lady. Buy me? Well—what do ye offer?

LADY S. You will? Oh—a hundred pounds!

GWYNN. Nay.

LADY S. Double it!

GWYNN. Higher.

LADY S. Double that!

GWYNN. Ah—you do pay well, but not well enough. Triple it, and then triple that, and when you've done, I'll throw your money in your face and show you you can't buy Nell Gwynn for love nor money! [*Marches up stage toward door. Stuart follows agitated.*]

LADY S. Wait—wait, you must hear me. Oh, is there no way to get you to help me?

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GWYNN. If there is, I don't happen to think of it just now.

LADY S. Mistress Gwynn, have you no heart?

GWYNN. Heart? Plenty and to spare—but it doesn't open to threats—nor pounds. Go to the King yourself, if you're so anxious for your Richmond.

LADY S. Oh, I dare not—I dare not.

GWYNN. He doesn't bite. Go buy his favors, if you can't buy mine! [*Starts to go again, but Stuart intercepts her.*]

LADY S. Mistress Gwynn, I've made a mistake about you—I'm sorry. But I'm in great trouble, and I don't know where to turn—nor what to do!

GWYNN. Trouble? Well—why didn't ye say that in the first place? Out with it.

LADY S. Can I trust you?

GWYNN. Probably not—I'm a woman. But I've a head on me shoulders, which is more than most of ye at court can say. It's about the Duke of Richmond, I take it.

LADY S. Yes—it's—oh, how can I tell you? The King has—has—

GWYNN. [*Quickly.*] Made love to ye, well?

LADY S. I tried to escape—I tried to avoid him—but tonight—he found me here alone and he—

GWYNN. Made love to ye—ye needn't shy at the word! And then?

LADY S. Then he got down on his knees—

GWYNN. On his *knees*—Charles—? Well?

LADY S. He said—he'd stay there until I said I loved him.

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GWYNN. I see—so you said it quick to get him up!

LADY S. Madame! I said “Then there you stay till the crack of doom, and after!”

GWYNN. You said that to Charles II, King of England? You said that? Lady Stuart, I’ve done ye great injustice. You’re a woman after my own heart. Why, I like you better every moment I see you—well—what then?

LADY S. His Majesty was very angry and insisted I must love another—so he put me through the list. Then he remembered seeing me in the Gardens with the Duke of Richmond—and decided he was the man. He hurried off to sign papers for his immediate recall.

GWYNN. I see, and you don’t want him recalled—because—?

LADY S. Because, Mistress Gwynn—I love him!

GWYNN. Now, why didn’t you say that at first, and spare us both, instead of trying to buy me up?

LADY S. Because I thought you—you were—

GWYNN. You thought I was a fiend instead of—a woman. Well, never mind that now. Richmond back at court—the King discovers you love, and there’s the Devil to pay. [*Stands by bench considering a moment.*] Well, I don’t see anything for it, but for Nelly to have it out with the King!

LADY S. Oh, you will? You think you could?

GWYNN. Think? Nay, Madame, I know—I am the Lord Chamberlain! [*Goes front left,*

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Stuart front right.] I'll do my best for you, but—

VOICE WITHOUT. Await me here—gentlemen—I'll see her alone.

LADY S. [*Alarmed.*] The King!

GWYNN. [*Laughs.*] The Divil! [*King appears at back. Stands looking from one to another in surprise.*]

KING. [*Testily.*] How now, ladies? What's this I hear?

GWYNN. Oh, you did hear it, did you, Sire? Lady Stuart said—the King—and I said—the Divil—but they're one and the same thing, your Majesty!

KING. You're here, are you, Nell? I went to the theater after you; they said you'd gone home, and I've been looking for you ever since.

GWYNN. [*Slyly.*] And 'twas your loving heart led you to me at last, eh, Sire? For one awful moment, I thought 'twas Lady Stuart you were seeking. [*King comes front facing Stuart.*]

KING. Lady Stuart—I did not know that you and the Gwynn had met. [*Gwynn watches Stuart anxiously for reply.*]

LADY S. We are but lately—friends, Sire.

GWYNN. Thanks. We're just getting acquainted. [*King sits at center, motioning them to do likewise. Stuart sits on bench, Gwynn leans on table.*]

KING. Nell, what are you up to, eh?

GWYNN. [*Laughs.*] When the King's away—the cats will play, you know, Sire. [*Sails up*

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stage.] We were just singing your Majesty's praises.

KING. I'd hate to leave my praises to Lady Stuart. Methinks they'd remain unsung!

GWYNN. Well, Sire, she made up in warmth, what she lacked in eloquence! [*She leans over Stuart, whispering.*] Leave me alone with him. [*She goes up stage again. King and S. sit in stony silence. Gwynn laughs in pantomime, then bursts out.*] Tilly—vally—you two are hilarious! [*She seizes King's hat, which hangs on his chair, marches front imitating King, strikes attitude in front of him, saying*] "How now, ladies, what's this I hear?" [*King scowls, smiles, laughs, rises.*]

KING. [*Sternly.*] Give me the hat, Nell.

GWYNN. [*Laughs.*] Nay, Sire. [*King goes up stage, S. rises. Gwynn takes in situation.*] Let's all sit down. No? Well, let's all stand up. [*Waves hand to Stuart. Loud aside.*] Leave me alone with him.

LADY S. How shall I get away?

GWYNN. Use your wits! [*Starts toward Stuart with exclamation.*] My Lady, what is it? You're pale—you're ill! [*Supports her to bench.*] She's fainted, poor soul! [*To S.*] Faint—will ye? [*King rushes forward.*]

KING. What's this? Fainted?

GWYNN. Yes, fainted. Do something, man—quick. [*To S.*] It's all right—keep it up. [*King distractedly looking about.*]

KING. But what, Nell—water on her?

GWYNN. No, wine in her. [*To S.*] Can't you turn pale?

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KING. Where, Nell—where?

GWYNN. Look under the chairs, Charles. Ye might try the table! [*He pours out wine, and rushes to them.*] There, take a little of this—that's better—now she's coming to. [*Returns glass to King, who goes up stage with it.*] Come to, a bit, will ye? Trust me, now—ask his Majesty to excuse ye. [*Both rise, Gwynn supporting Stuart.*]

LADY S. [*Weakly.*] If your Majesty will permit me to retire?

KING. With great reluctance, Madame.

LADY S. [*Stuart and Gwynn both courtesy, S. backing to door at R.*] Sire!

KING. Madame! [*At door, Stuart hesitates.*]

GWYNN. Trust me—wait until I call you. [*Loud.*] Good night, Lady Stuart. [*Gwynn waits, facing audience, biting her lip, in doubt as to her next step. All through scene that follows, she must make the audience feel that she is slowly feeling her way toward her purpose—to get the recall away from the King. King walks slowly front, arms folded and watches her.*]

KING. [*Sternly.*] Nell, what are you here for?

GWYNN. [*Folds arms, facing him.*] Sire, what are you here for?

KING. [*Advancing.*] I'm here for—you!

GWYNN. That flattering tongue of yours will be the death of you yet, Sire.

KING. You're up to some mischief—what is it now, Minx?

GWYNN. Curiosity, thy name is Charles

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Stuart. [*Laughs and runs past him down left.*]
Well, if you must know—I'm to play the part of
cold court beauty in my next comedy, and [*Low
courtesy.*] I've come to headquarters to learn it.
[*King sits on bench, smiling at her.*]

KING. They'll have to give you a good many
lessons, Nelly, to make a courtier out of you.
What have you learned tonight?

GWYNN. You think I can't do it? Well—now
watch me! [*Takes off hat, and sails up stage.*]
Enter Lady—Lady—Pollywinkle! [*She sweeps
down stage, making magnificent courtesy at cen-
ter.*] Your Majesty's most humble servant!
[*King bends smiling toward her. She turns on
him.*] Well, get up, Sire, and act as if I were
somebody! [*He jumps to feet, bows low.*]

KING. Milady, you dazzle us with your
beauty!

GWYNN. Don't I? [*Low bow*] Your Majesty
is most gracious!

KING. Methinks I saw thee, Lady Pretty-
winkle—

GWYNN. [*Sternly.*] Pollywinkle!

KING. Ah, yes, Pollywinkle, at the play to-
night?

GWYNN. Aye. I trust your Majesty was not
so bored as I. 'Tis a very dull thing to sit
through so dull a play, and that odious Gwynn—
how she did smirk and wriggle. I was so bored!
[*King turns aside to hide smiles.*]

KING. Bored? I was enchanted. The Gwynn
was at her best—such wit—such daring! [*Gwynn*

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claps hands behind him, then regains haughty manner.]

GWYNN. I hear this paragon was a shoemaker's daughter! [*King sits on bench.*]

KING. [*Sternly.*] Not a word, Madame, against the Gwynn in my presence! [*Gwynn kneels before him in pretended alarm.*]

GWYNN. I have the misfortune to have incurred your majesty's disfavor. I crave forgiveness! [*Puts elbow on knee, chin in hand, laughs up at him.*] Well, why don't you say something—I can't do all the talking!

KING. Nell—I love you!

GWYNN. Of course, you do. I don't blame you—oh—now that's Nell Gwynn. I'm out of character. I mean—[*Stiffly*].—Sire, you overwhelm me with—with—

KING—Embarrassment?

GWYNN. Not a bit of it. With in—indebtedness! [*Both roar. King takes her hands drawing her to him.*]

KING. Ah, Nelly, you're a merry witch! Don't pick up the court tricks, child. I like your own better!

GWYNN. My own? I have no tricks, Sire!

KING. Ah, you're full of them. [*She rises, bending over him.*]

GWYNN. Now, the frown has all gone, and we can amuse ourselves. [*Looks about.*] What do you say, Charles, to a drop of Milady's sherry? [*Runs to table, fills glasses and takes center.*] One for you, and one for me, and I give you—My King!

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KING. [*Joins her at center.*] Here's to the merriest, maddest witch in the kingdom—Nell Gwynn! [*She takes glasses and goes to table. He crosses down left to writing table. Nell watches him, dubiously, then seizes stool, and runs down beside him.*]

GWYNN. Sire, I haven't seen you for twelve whole hours—what's the news with the kingdom—eh? Is the council waiting for you outside the door? [*Kneels on stool, arm about him.*] Ah, now there's the frown again. Must I do all my hard work over?

KING. Was I frowning, Nelly? [*Slips down on stool, his arm about her, her head against him.*]

GWYNN. Sour as a lemon. What's the matter—has the Council been troubling you?

KING. Not as much as I've troubled it, dear heart.

GWYNN. Then it must be money. I'll lend ye a bit. [*Offers purse, which King weighs laughingly. She snatches it.*] I know—Rochester has a new rhyme at your Majesty's expense!

KING. [*Sternly.*] I'll have his head if he has!

GWYNN. He'll have the better of you yet, Sire.

KING. How so?

GWYNN. He'll be out—ahead! [*Both laugh, Nell's head on King's shoulder.*] Hark you—I've improved on Rochester myself—Charles. [*She puts stool up stage, kneels beside him, like effigy on tomb.*]

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Here lies our sovereign, stiff and stark,
Whose amorous course is now run.
He never loved a witless maid—
Nor got loved—by a wise one!

[*King laughs loudly, draws her to him—saying*]

KING. Oddsfish, Madame, I'll have your head!

GWYNN. All right, Sire—where'll you have it? [*Puts head on his breast.*]

KING. Ah, Nelly—Nelly—would there were more in the kingdom like you, lass. In your voice there is eternal sunshine. With you there is rest—and forgetfulness, dear heart. [*Gwynn slides to floor at his feet, looking up at him.*]

GWYNN. [*Sighs.*] Ah, Sire, 'tis a pity you don't concentrate your love—then you'd get more rest—and you wouldn't need forgetfulness!

KING. Well, I may love too often, but not too well, Nell. For I always come back to you—lass— [*Gwynn springs up, and takes center.*]

GWYNN. [*Indignantly.*] So I'm your last resort, am I?

KING. [*Goes to her.*] Oh, I didn't mean that, Nell—

GWYNN. You'll never make up to me for that speech, Charles.

KING. Come—come—what will you have? Must I go down on my royal knees?

GWYNN. Faith—'twould surprise them. You must pay for forgiveness—I've a favor, Sire.

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[*She watches him keenly. He goes to bench—she crosses left.*]

KING. You—a favor? 'Tis granted.

GWYNN. [*Joyfully.*] Promise me before I ask it?

KING. I promise. [*She runs to him.*]

GWYNN. Well, then—don't recall the Duke of Richmond.

KING. [*Starts.*] How now, Nell?

GWYNN. Now, don't jump round like that—and don't use the royal manner on me, for it's wasted.

KING. Is all my court in love with Richmond? But ten days ago you asked for his recall.

GWYNN. But then I didn't know all.

KING. All what?

GWYNN. Swear by your crown you won't breathe a word I'm going to say, to a soul—nor speak to anyone about it.

KING. I'll make no rash promises.

GWYNN. Very well, then—you won't hear it.

KING. Nell, I command thee!

GWYNN. Command? Pht! What's that? [*King frowns, smiles, drops back resigned.*]

KING. Well, I promise. [*Gwynn runs to sit on arm of bench, arm about him.*]

GWYNN. Now, that's my nice little King! Well, in the first place I wanted the Duke of Richmond back for reasons—which I refuse to divulge—[*King looks at her.*—]but I wasn't in love with him—truly I was not. Then I heard that this Lady Stuart—whom I hate—hate—hate, and your Majesty knows why—

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KING. Lady Stuart—what about her?

GWYNN. She wants him back, too—to pay up a grudge she owes him. She has no use for the man, you know, Sire. I came here and demanded an explanation. She said she wanted him back, but she didn't dare ask your Majesty for his recall—so she got it by a ruse—

KING. [*Angrily.*] A ruse?

GWYNN. She said she'd have him back in no time, and I said—"Oh, I don't know"—and she said "Mistress Gwynn—the thing is done." "Very well, then," said I, "we'll undo it." [*King starts up on stage as if to go.*]

KING. [*Angrily.*] Where is she, Nell? Where is this woman? [*She runs to him, seizes arm, and leads him back to couch.*]

GWYNN. Now, calm yourself, Sire, and sit down there. And remember you gave me your word you wouldn't speak to a soul but me about it. What's more, will you kindly choose, between that cold-blooded iceberg, and myself—she says Richmond comes home, I say he stays—now choose! [*King rises and crosses in towering rage.*]

KING. Choose? I'll have you understand, Madame, that I'll not be pulled hither and thither by the women of my court like a puppet in a Punch and Judy show! Nor you, nor Stuart, nor any other shall dictate to me. I'll pay her for this trick, and as for you— [*Nell claps hands laughing.*]

GWYNN. Look at the royal temper!

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KING. As for you—I'll banish you both!
[*Laughter frozen on Gwynn's face.*]

GWYNN. Banish! That word—from you to me! Ah— [*Goes slowly up stage, gets hat and starts to go, then runs down behind him.*] Ah, Sire—banish me from the kingdom, before you banish me from you heart! [*Goes slowly up stage to door. King turns, holds out arms.*]

KING. [*In spite of himself.*] Nell—Nell—

GWYNN. [*Joyously.*] Sire!

KING. Come back—dear love— [*She runs to him, and drops on knees before him. He kisses her hair.*] I've chosen. See—here's the recall! [*Takes paper from bosom and gives it to her. She kisses his hand passionately.*]

GWYNN. Ah, Sire—thanks—thanks!

KING. But let me off from my promise, Nell. I must send the Stuart from court—she's tricked me—she's tricked me! [*He goes up stage, she crosses next, hugging paper.*]

GWYNN. It's a good idea, Charles—send her away—but don't tell her why. Now, Charles, you may have your faults, but you never lied to me, and you gave me your word.

KING. [*Holds out hands to her.*] Nell, I think you're the only woman in the kingdom who can say I never lied to her!

GWYNN. [*Laughs.*] Lyin's a habit, dear, like lovin', and we've got the habit. Hark—did you hear the hour?

KING. Yes, it's late—come along. I'll see you home.

GWYNN. No—I'll stay and see Lady Stuart.

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I want to tell her that I used a ruse, too, and the last ruse is the best—eh, Sire?

KING. [*Sits on table.*] Very well, then, I'll wait.

GWYNN. No, you must not. Think of your reputation.

KING. My what?

GWYNN. Reputation—did you never hear that word?

KING. Well, we don't use it much at court.

GWYNN. Assume a virtue if you have it not—and away with you.

KING. Ah, Nell, let me stay.

GWYNN. [*At center.*] Charles II., King of England—as Lord Chamberlain of this realm, I **command thee to depart!**

KING. [*Seizes her hand, bows low over it.*] Thy word is England's law, Milord.

GWYNN. Goodnight—my King! [*He goes to door, she runs after throwing kiss.*] Oh, wait—wait—Sire—I have a better idea—come back. [*Drags him front.*] Ye shall banish the Stuart this very night.

KING. What's this?

GWYNN. Yes. I'll call her in, and you can do the thing that's to be done.

KING. But what excuse shall I offer—unless I say I know she's tricked me?

GWYNN. Don't offer any excuse—tell her—you're going to give her—a vacation. [*Puts hand on his shoulder, leads him front, watching him.*] Charles, did you ever make love to her?

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KING. Love—Oh, well, now and then perhaps.

GWYNN. Did she take to it?

KING. [*Shrewdly.*] Nell—what do you know?
[*She puts hands on his two shoulders.*]

GWYNN. I know—you—Sire! Did she?

KING. She's a cold woman, Nell—

GWYNN. Then there ye have it. Tell her she's banished for snubbin' the King.

KING. Before you? She'll think you're jealous.

GWYNN. [*Hesitates.*] N—o—not before me. I tell you, I'll hide, then when you've gone I'll come out and bid her a fond farewell.

KING. No, no, that won't do at all.

GWYNN. [*Runs toward door.*] Yes, it will do. [*Calls.*] Lady Stuart—Lady Stuart!

KING. [*Trying to stop her.*] Nell—Nell—I forbid you—

GWYNN. Out of my way, Charles, I'll hide—up here. [*Runs behind curtain at back.*]

KING. [*Aghast.*] Damme—the impudence!
[*Enter Lady S. hastily.*]

LADY S. Yes, Mistress Gwynn—has he gone? Oh—your Majesty—I thought 'twas Mistress Gwynn's voice.

KING. [*Coldly.*] So 'twas.

LADY S. But she has gone?

KING. Well, we remain, Lady Stuart. We find our cold English climate so blighting to a warm nature like your own, that we would suggest that an indefinite stay in southern France might bring about a thaw.

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LADY S. You mean I may go? Thanks—thanks. [*Drops on knees.*]

KING. [*Coldly.*] We contemplate a colony abroad for those loyal souls, who like yourself find the King's love an insult—and banishment the highest joy!

LADY S. Loyalty spells different things to you and me, Sire. I carry out your Majesty's commands tomorrow without regret, save that I would I might have said farewell to Mistress Gwynn.

KING. [*Smiles sardonically.*] We'll grant your last request. [*He pulls curtain, disclosing Gwynn, fingers in ears.*]

GWYNN. I haven't heard a word. Did you do it? [*Sees Lady S. comes front in surprise, looking from one to other.*] Why, what's the matter?

KING. Two can play at tricks, Nell.

GWYNN. [*Laughs.*] Ah—Sire—you—

LADY S. [*Still, in the dark.*] Mistress Gwynn?

GWYNN. Aye 'tis meself. His Majesty wouldn't have me present at your interview, so I stepped into the ante-room. [*Gets recall from breast, and hands it to her, unseen by King.*] Here's the recall—I got it from him by lyin' and blarney. [*Lady S. clasps it and the hand, too.*]

LADY S. [*Spontaneously.*] How good you are!

GWYNN. Faith—'tain't often I blush at that word. No, 'tis all in my day's work. Last night one role, tomorrow another, and tonight—well, I

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grant you I haven't played so bad, for I've played for happiness, and I've played for—Love! [*Puts out hand to King, who raises it to lips.*]

KING. 'And you haven't played in vain—Witch—woman!

CURTAIN.

MANNERS AND MODES

MANNERS AND MODES.

A SATIRE.

Gertie Gay
....a saleslady of Makemuch Co. Millinery Dept.
Mary Mocker
....a saleslady of Makemuch Co. Millinery Dept.
Miss Ann Thrope.....who needs no label
Miss Waver.....a typical shopper
Miss Aider.....her friend
Mrs. Eminence Blount.....a modern mother
Francesca Blount.....the latest thing in daughters
Miss Optimist.....a humorist unafraid
Mrs. Daniel Cheery.....an old fashioned lady

Setting—a millinery shop. At back tables with hats set up on standards. At left a cabinet containing hats. At right down front a big mirror with chair in front of it. Hand glass hangs at side of mirror. Exits right and left down front.

Costumes—Gertie Gay and Mary Mocker, black skirts and jerseys. Gertie has long train, fussy lace jabot at neck, very exaggerated pompadour—wears jewelry—in short a very dressy person. Mary wears short skirt, cuffs, and turn over collar. Miss Waver and Miss Aider “dressy” shoppers. Miss Ann Thrope very severe tailor made gown, and hat. Mrs. Blount very handsomely dressed but more like a girl of twenty than a mother of a half grown child. Francesca, a stylish little girl. Miss Optimist, a tailor suit. Mrs. Cheery, any old thing provided it is old fashioned.

Scene—Millinery Shop. Time, morning. Discovered—Mary Mocker at back putting out the stock, brushing hats, etc. Gertie Gay lounges

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'down front on chair, and as curtain gets well up, yawns and stretches.

GERTIE. Lawzee, I'm tired this morning!

MARY. *This morning?* As far as I can see you're tired every morning.

GERTIE. [*Chewing gum vigorously.*] Well, if you went out into society as much as I do, I guess you'd be tired too.

MARY. [*Gravely.*] I guess going as much as you do wouldn't tire me out!

GERTIE. [*Abused tone.*] Well, it's awful hard work bein' a society girl an' gettin' down to work every mornin'. Of course I don't have to do it, if I don't want to—I don't have to work—

MARY. O, no—you can starve, if you'd rather! Did you ever see the woman yet that had to work? They all do it just to pass away the time. I'm thinkin' of hirin' out to a museum as the only livin' woman that *has* to work and ain't ashamed of it.

GERTIE. [*Superior.*] Well, I just do it for a pastime. I like to make my own spendin' money!

MARY. I guess if you didn't make it you wouldn't have it.

GERTIE. [*Haughtily.*] That's all you know about it, Miss Mocker. Why, I can get *married* any day I want to.

MARY. [*Smiles derisively.*] You don't say?

GERTIE. Think I haven't got the chances? Well, there are just four men in this town to-day that I could marry if I wanted to.

MARY. O, I don't blame you for stayin' single

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—it's lots easier to support yourself than it is to support yourself—and a man!

GERTIE. [*Looks back at her.*] You mean cat! [*She yawns and stretches. Mary turns on her.*]

MARY. Lie down, do, and take a nap—Mrs. Potter Palmer—while the rest of us get out the stock!

GERTIE. [*Crossly, picking up hat brush.*] Oh, you needn't worry. I do as much as you do.

MARY. Yes, thanks to the floorwalker. [*Mock solemnity.*] But then with all your social duties—I suppose you really do *more* than I do!

GERTIE. [*Swallows the bait.*] That's right—I do. Say—[*Leans across the table toward Mary*]
—say—I never got in till 1 o'clock last night!

MARY. [*Shakes brush at her.*] Oh—naughty! Went to the horse show—I suppose. I didn't see your name in the list of box holders!

GERTIE. Horse show—I guess not. I had a date with Charlie!

MARY. Guess you didn't go to the horse show then, on Charlie's eight dollars a week. I should think you'd be ashamed to go out with that man—I'd feel as if I was takin' the food out of his mouth!

GERTIE. Well, that's *his* business! I tell you we had a time!

MARY. Ten—twenty—thirt—I suppose.

GERTIE. Well, you've got another suppose acomin'! We went to this here Mrs. Pat Campbell (pronounced Camp-bell) down to the Grand. She's homely as a hedgehog—but you ought to seen the clothes she had on. And you know the

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feller that was in love with her reminded me a lot of that Mr. Cohn, the floorwalker downstairs.

MARY. Get to work—here comes Smithy. He can tell a mile off whether you're a workin' or loafin'! [*Both very busy while he passes.*]

GERTIE. Old sneak—I wish we had a good lookin' young floorwalker up here, that would make some allowances for the girls.

MARY. You idiot! You don't suppose this store is agoin' to hire floorwalkers that make allowances, do you? We're just a lot of machines, hired cheap for the store to get work out of, and it'll get it, too.

GERTIE. Well, some of the floorwalkers ain't so hard on the girls. You know Sadie was tellin' me that she heard they was goin' to make a rule that salesladies couldn't chew gum durin' workin' hours. I tell you what with wearin' black clothes 'n givin' up gum we ain't got no rights left.

MARY. Rights! [*Laughs.*] That's good—machines don't have rights.

GERTIE. Well, I ain't no machine, and nobody can't make me one, neither. I'll chew gum all I want to, an' I'd like to see 'em try to stop me. You can always put it under your tongue when the floorwalker's talkin' to you.

MARY. That's right, Gertie—keep up the bluff. But you're a machine, like I am—an' all the rest of the two thousand people in this store. If we're old or sick we get turned off, with a hundred others to take our place. Oh, no, we

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ain't machines! [*Voice without calls—"Forward—forward."*]

GERTIE. You take these two, an' I'll take the next. I guess these are just rubbernecks, anyway. [*Enter Miss Waver and Miss Aider, who stroll about examining hats. Mary goes to them.*]

MARY. Something in hats, madame?

MISS WAVER. Um—yes.

MARY. Walking hat, or dress hat?

MISS WAVER. Um—I don't know. Show me what you have.

MARY. About what price hat?

MISS WAVER. Um—I don't know. Just show me everything.

MARY. Will you sit here? [*They sit down before glass. Mary goes up stage for hats. Miss Waver takes off her hat.*]

MISS WAVER. Just look at my hair, will you— isn't it a sight? [*Mary returns with several hats.*]

MARY. Here's a nice little hat—sort of half way hat, you see. You can use it for shopping or it goes well with a reception dress. [*She puts it on Miss W., who turns from side to side many times.*]

MISS WAVER. I don't care much for that shade of velvet, do you, Mabel?

MISS AIDER. Oh, I don't know—it isn't so bad.

MISS WAVER. I don't think it's very becoming to me.

MARY. Don't you—well, how do you like this? [*She puts plain hat on her.*] That's a natty thing.

MISS WAVER. Oh no, that won't do at all. I

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don't look well in such a severe hat. I have to have something sort of dressy, you know. [*Mary puts feathered hat on her.*] There—that's better. Of course I don't wear my hair this way usually, so you can't tell much about it. [*Looks at herself long.*] I rather like that, don't you, Mabel?

MISS AIDER. Yes, I do—it's very becoming to you.

MISS WAVER. It's a little too high on this side, don't you think so?

MARY. Too high? Well, that could be altered, you know. [*Presses trimming down on side.*] Here—like that.

MISS WAVER. Yes, that's much better.

MARY. It's very stylish and becoming to you.

MISS WAVER. [*Anxiously.*] Do you think so really? It's so hard to get a hat that's becoming to me. You like this one, don't you, Mabel?

MISS AIDER. Why, yes—but I thought you wanted a hat that would do for the street—I think that's a little loud for shopping, don't you?

MARY. [*Promptly.*] These are all the style for street wear.

MISS WAVER. What's that over there? [*Points to hat on standard.*]

MARY. This one? [*Brings it to her.*] Well, that's more elaborate than the one you have on.

MISS WAVER. Well, just put it on and see how I look in it. [*Mary puts it on her.*] Oh, that's lovely, isn't it, Mabel? Don't you like this?

MISS AIDER. Yes, it's stunning.

MISS WAVER. Oh, I like this so much. Now,

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haven't you got something like that, only not so elaborate?

MARY. [*Sighs.*] I'm afraid not, but I'll ask the head woman. [*She goes off.*]

MISS WAVER. These clerks are so stupid! They never have any idea what to show you—and you simply can't make them understand what you want. The idea of her showing me this—! [*Mary returns.*]

MARY. I'm sorry, but we haven't anything of that order. We could make you a hat like this in darker shades, if you like.

MISS WAVER. How long would it take?

MARY. About a week.

MISS WAVER. What do you think, Mabel—would you do it? [*To Mary.*] Do you think the hat is becoming to me?

MARY. You never had a more becoming hat on your head.

MISS WAVER. Well, what colors would you suggest having it made in?

MARY. How would it be in brown with a touch of red?

MISS WAVER. Oh, no—I never wear brown.

MARY. How would you like it in gray and black—that's very stylish this season.

MISS WAVER. Is it? What do you think, Mabel, do you suppose I'd like it in gray and black?

MISS AIDER. Why yes—I should think you might.

MISS WAVER. Well, let me see the materials, if you please. [*Mary goes out.*] I wonder if

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I'll be satisfied with the thing. Do you think I will? [*Mary returns with materials.*]

MARY. Now, the hat would be black and the chou gray.

MISS WAVER. Why not have the chou black and the hat gray?

MARY. Well, you could have it that way if you like.

MISS WAVER. Oh, well, I guess I'd rather have it the other way. And I could have it in a week? How much would it be?

MARY. Fifteen dollars.

MISS WAVER. Fifteen dollars!! My goodness—I'd never pay that for it in the world!

MARY. It's a very good piece of velvet, you see—

MISS WAVER. But fifteen dollars—I don't like the hat much anyway—it's too small.

MARY. And you think you wouldn't like any of these others?

MISS WAVER. [*Casts supercilious glance about shop, then reaches for her own hat.*] No—I don't like your hats much anyway. I never buy my hats here—I always go to Field's. [*Rises.*] Come on, Mabel, let's go over to Field's—it's the only place in town to shop. [*They go out.*]

MARY. [*Grimly.*] Come in again. [*She begins to put away hats. Gertie laughs.*]

GERTIE. Wouldn't that jar you? I knew they were rubbers when they came in.

MARY. What's the difference whether you know it or not—you have to show them the stock just the same.

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GERTIE. Well, you needn't be so cross about it. Wait till you've had the whole stock out three times a day and not sold a cent's worth—that's my record for yesterday. O Law—here's my turn. I know this brand though—watch me sell her something. [*Enter Miss Ann Thorpe with business-like stride.*]

MISS A. T. Good morning—I want to look at a hat, please.

GERTIE. Trimmed or untrimmed.

MISS A. T. Ready to wear.

GERTIE. Dress hat or street?

MISS A. T. Both.

GERTIE. Oh, you want to look at both?

MISS A. T. No, I want one hat that will do for both. [*Gertie sniffs and goes for hats. Miss A. T. takes off her hat, smooths her hair flat. Gertie comes back with collection. She starts to put one on, and Miss A. T. takes it from her.*]

MISS A. T. I'll put them on myself, please; I don't like anyone to touch my head. No—that won't do—look how it sets up on my head.

GERTIE. Well, most everybody wears a pompadour now, you know.

MISS A. T. Well, I don't—so I'd like a hat to fit my head.

GERTIE. Try this one. [*Miss A. T. claps it on.*] That's wrong side before.

MISS A. T. [*Simply.*] Oh, is it? [*Puts it on right.*] It feels much better wrong side than right.

GERTIE. [*Indifferently.*] It looks just lovely on you.

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MISS A. T. I don't care how it looks. I want it to *feel* all right.

GERTIE. Here's a swell little hat—quite dressy, too.

MISS A. T. Then I don't want it—I want a plain hat. [*Gertie gets another.*]

GERTIE. How's this?

MISS A. T. No—I don't like that—it's too young.

GERTIE. Too young—Oh, do you think so?

MISS A. T. Haven't you something else? I'm in a great hurry.

GERTIE. No, I don't think we have anything that would suit you.

MISS A. T. [*Points.*] What's that?

GERTIE. Oh, you wouldn't like that, I'm sure.

MISS A. T. Suppose you let me decide! [*Gertie gets hat and pokes it at her. She puts it on.*]

GERTIE. You've got it on sideways.

MISS A. T. I like it sideways. How much is it?

GERTIE. Ten dollars.

MISS A. T. I'll take it. [*Gets pocketbook from bag.*]

GERTIE. Where shall I send it?

MISS A. T. I'll wear it!

GERTIE. Shall I send the old one?

MISS A. T. No—I'm through with that. [*She puts new hat on, and rises.*] Much obliged to you—good morning. [*Hastens out. Gertie gathers up hats.*]

MARY. I thought for a minute you'd lost her.

GERTIE. Well, I didn't care if I did. Ever

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see such a crank? Will you look at this thing?
[*Twirls Miss A. T.'s cast-off hat on her finger.*]
That must have seen better days. [*Voice outside*
—“*Forward—forward.*”]

MARY. Mrs. Eminence Blount and daughter. She owns a school up here somewhere, where they teach children how not to behave. Watch this if you're looking for fun. [*Enter Mrs. Blount and Francesca.*]

MRS. BLOUNT. Good morning, Miss Mocker. Have you anything pretty for a little girl?

FRANCESCA. Mamma, I don't wish a ready-made hat!

MRS. B. Now, darling, let us see what Miss Mocker has, and then if you don't like them we can order.

MARY. We have lovely things, Miss Francesca—just imported from Paris by our head milliner—

FRANCESCA. Get them out then. [*Francesca tosses over hats, down front. Mrs. B. takes seat by mirror.*]

MARY. Something dressy, Mrs. Blount?

MRS. B. Oh, no—sweet and simple and girlish.

FRANCESCA. Not too simple and girlish.

MRS. B. [*Faintly reproachful.*] Francesca!

FRANCESCA. Well, I'm not going to wear any more bonnets, mamma.

MRS. B. You're going to wear what mamma gets for you.

FRAN. Providing mamma gets what I want!

MARY. I'm sure we have just what you want.

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FRAN. Well, why don't you get them out then? [*Mary goes for hat.*]

MRS. B. Don't be rude to clerks, Francesca, it's such bad form.

FRAN. I'm not rude, mamma—but I didn't come here to have her tell me what I want. [*Mary appears with two hats. One simple—other stringed.*]

MARY. Here's something sweet.

FRAN. Isn't it? You can take that away. There's no use of trying it on me for I won't have it.

MRS. B. Francesca—you're very rude. Why don't you like it—it's very sweet and pretty.

FRAN. Do you expect me to wear strings at my age?

MARY. Strings are very fashionable for girls from 14 to 15.

FRAN. Well, they're not fashionable in my set!

MRS. B. Just try it on, darling.

FRAN. [*Sternly.*] Mamma, I cannot permit you to buy me that thing, so it's a waste of time to try it on.

MRS. B. [*Resignedly.*] It's sweet.

FRAN. If you like it so much buy it for yourself. You're always buying hats that are too young for me.

MRS. B. Francesca, I cannot permit this.

FRAN. Bring on the next. [*Mary puts hat on her.*]

FRAN. Here, if you buy me that you'll have to get me a nurse. We won't have that, thank

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you. Well, is this all the imported hats from Paris?

MARY. No, we have others. Perhaps if you tell me what you want instead of what you don't—I might be able to suit you.

FRAN. I don't know what I want—that's the point, you see.

MRS. B. Francesca, you're really very rude. [*Mary puts hat on her.*]

FRAN. That may suit Paris, but it doesn't suit me.

MARY. That's very pretty on you.

FRAN. I'm glad you think so. What's that over there?

MARY. Won't you try this one?

FRAN. No—I don't like it.

MRS. B. My dear, you can't tell how you like a thing until you try it on.

FRAN. Yes, I can tell by its expression when it sits up on my hand like that. [*Mary returns with pale dress hat.*]

MARY. Is this the one you mean?

FRAN. Yes, try that on.

MRS. B. But, Francesca, that hat is much too old and elaborate for you. I can't allow you to buy it.

FRAN. I tell you, mamma, you buy it and I'll wear it occasionally.

MRS. B. I'll never bring you again. Hereafter I'll buy your hats myself.

FRAN. And I'll pile them up on my shelf with the other bonnets you've bought me. I'm going to bring this matter up in the school on Monday,

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and see whether children ought to be coerced in buying hats. [*Mary returns with broad-brimmed hat.*]

MRS. B. There, that's lovely—try that on. [*Mary puts it on her.*]

FRAN. Now, isn't that *sweet*?

MARY. You don't like that?

FRAN. Well, I should say I didn't. Suppose mamma, you buy this one for me, and I'll buy that one for you.

MRS. B. I'd never allow you to wear the thing—

FRAN. [*Cheerfully.*] Very well, then, we won't take anything today. [*Begins to put on her hat.*]

MRS. B. I'm the best judge of what you ought to wear.

FRAN. But I have to wear it!

MRS. B. Darling, I'm in such a hurry. I promised to meet Mrs. Ed. U. Cator at 11 and it's after that now. Won't you do what mamma wants you to?

FRAN. [*Suddenly.*] All right. Give me your pocketbook, and I'll pay for it and then I'll meet you downstairs.

MRS. B. [*Radiant.*] That's mamma's nice little girl. Here's the pocketbook—now hurry down, won't you. It's not an expensive hat?

MARY. Oh, no. [*Exit Mrs. B.*]

FRAN. Put that one in the box. [*Points to pale dress hat.*] I won't have that other thing.

MARY. But what will your mother say?

FRAN. Oh, I'll manage her all right when I

MANNERS AND MODES.

get her home. She doesn't like to give in before—servants! How much is it?

MARY. [*Coldly.*] Thirty-five dollars.

FRAN. Thirty-five—whew—pleasant little surprise for mamma. Wonder if she's got it. [*Turns contents of pocketbook upside down, and counts out thirty-five in twos, tens and small bills.*] All but two cents—you'll have to trust me for that. It will come out today?

MARY. Probably.

FRAN. Good morning. [*Gertie laughs and they begin to put away stock.*]

MARY. How would you like to own that darling child? I'd like to give her one good old-fashioned thrashing—

GERTIE. Oh, dear, Oh dear—it's up to me. [*Enter Miss Optimist jauntily.*]

MISS O. I want a hat to wear with a tailor suit. Not too severe, and not too elaborate.

GERTIE. [*Without looking at her.*] All right. Sit down and I'll show you just the thing you want. [*She gathers up a few hats helter-skelter. She offers a turban, Miss O. smilingly examines it.*]

MISS O. That's a strange looking thing. Which is the front of it? [*Gertie puts it on her.*] Take it off quickly. It's such a shock to your self-esteem to see yourself in a thing like that! [*Gertie offers big hat.*] Wait a moment. Suppose you look at me before you try any more. You see I have rather a round face so I can't wear either a very large or a very small hat. [*Gertie sniffs and brings two more.*]

DRAMATIC ÉPISODES.

GERTIE. That's swell on you.

MISS O. I fear it's a little too swell. [*Takes it off and examines carefully.*] What class is it? Animal, vegetable, or mineral?

GERTIE. [*Haughtily.*] It's one of the swell-est things we have in the house.

MISS O. Um—hum. Let's see the other one. [*Gertie puts it on her.*] It looks as if there had been a landslide and part of it was lost.

GERTIE. [*Incensed.*] It's awfully hard to get a hat to look well on you, you've such a funny shaped head.

MISS O. [*Cheerfully.*] Well, it's the only head I have. Haven't you a funny shape department?

GERTIE. Not yet—we're thinking of putting one in! [*Gertie goes to search for others, and Miss O. gets up and tries various hats on herself, laughing.*] Wonder why we didn't stop at head feathers—we've steadily degenerated ever since! [*Gertie comes back with armful.*] No—I don't care for that load. There—what's that? That's exactly the sort of thing I want. [*Gertie has great trouble finding the one she means, puts it on her and shakes her head violently.*]

GERTIE. I don't like that one at all.

MISS O. And I like it immensely! How much is it?

GERTIE. Fourteen dollars.

MISS O. Fourteen—really? Why it's a bargain. I'll take it at once. Charge and send, please, Miss Optimist, 123 Hopeful Street. [*She goes out. Mary comes on.*]

MANNERS AND MODES.

MARY. Sell her anything?

GERTIE. Did I? Sold her the hat I been savin' and scrimpin' for! One of these smarties—knows it all!

MARY. Well, she seemed to know a good thing when she saw it. Cheer up, Gertie! [*Voice without: "Forward—forward."*]

[*Enter Mrs. Cheery, loaded with bundles.*]

MRS CHEERY. Mornin' Miss—I want to buy a bunnit.

MARY. All right. Black?

MRS. C. Wa'l, now, I'd say black myself, but father an' the boys they sez this mornin'—"Now! mother, don't git one of them black bunnits, with them eternal black buttercups on ut," so I reckon I got to git another brand this time. [*Mary and Gertie laugh.*]

MARY. I'll show you what we have. [*Goes off and gets two.*]

MRS. C. I like black bunnits, myself. They hold their own so long. I wear my bunnits six years, an' it takes a black one to keep fresh and new lookin'.

MARY. How would you like this gray one? It's sweet on your gray hair.

MRS. C. Mercy me—I don't look myself in that thing.

MARY. No, you look ten years younger.

MRS. C. Well, I dunno as I like it. Most too stylish fur me.

MARY. Young—Oh, no—it's sweet on you.

MRS. C. You like it, do you? Well, I don't want to be dressin' up young at my age.

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MARY. Not a bit too young for you. Gertie, don't you think this is becomin' to the lady?

GERTIE. It's just swe——

MARY. [*Aside.*] Don't say swell, or she won't take it.

GERTIE. It's grand on you.

MRS. C. Well, just try a black one to see how I look in it. [*Mary goes for it. Mrs. C. turns to Gertie.*] You look tired, Miss.

GERTIE. I am.

MRS. C. Well, set down an' rest.

GERTIE. I can't, the floorwalker might catch me at it.

MRS. C. Do you mean to say that he won't let you set down?

GERTIE. 'Gainst the rules.

MARY. Here's the black one.

MRS. C. This girl here is tired an' ought to rest. I'll go speak to the man about it——

GERTIE. Wouldn't do any good—he'd think I'd been complainin'.

MRS. C. The idee—the very idee. I wish I had you out to our place, you poor, tired thing—I'd rest you up. Ah, there's the black one. Now, I look like Martha Cheery again, and father and the boys 'll know me all right. I don't want them to have to get used to a new mother that's ten years younger than she ought to be. I reckon I'll take that.

MARY. All right, Mrs. Cheery. It's five dollars.

MRS. C. Land's sakes—bunnits gets dearer all

MANNERS AND MODES.

the time. I only paid two fifty for the one I got on.

MARY. Shall I send it?

MRS. C. No, jest do it up in a passel an' I'll take it right along. [*While Mary goes to get it wrapped, Gertie helps her with bonnet.*]

GERTIE. Shall I tie it for you?

MRS. C. Oh, thank you, Miss. I ain't used to bein' waited on—I ain't never had a daughter to do things for me—nothin' but big hulkin' boys. I allus wanted a daughter. [*Mary comes with parcel.*] Thank you, Miss. Well, now I'm off. If you ever happen out our way just come an' see us. We're five miles out of Lombard—everybody knows Daniel Cheery's. Goodbye to you—Goodbye.

BOTH. Goodbye.

GERTIE. [*Lightly*] Good old soul!

MARY. Bless her heart—makes you think of your own mother. [*Carefully brushes a tear off her cheek.*] [*Gong sounds.*] Twelve o'clock, Gertie. Time for lunch. Come on. [*They go off.*]

CURTAIN.

THE CONFESSIONAL

THE CONFESSIONAL.

CHARACTERS.

Mr. Jerry Newton.

Mrs. Jerry Newton.

Barker, the Butler.

SCENE — Newton's drawing room. TIME — Nine o'clock.

[*Mr. Jerry Newton strolls in, humming, followed by Mrs. Jerry, who stops at the door and speaks to the servant without.*]

MRS. NEWTON. Serve the coffee in here, please, Barker. [*She strolls down to a small table and picks up a magazine, turning its leaves, absently.*]

MR. NEWTON. It's many a long day, old lady, since we dined alone together.

MRS. NEWTON. [*Absently*] So it is—so it is. [*The butler enters with the coffee, going out quietly after having served it.*]

MR. NEWTON. T'isn't such a bad idea—sort of like old times, before we took to going our own gait so steadily. Do you remember the bully little dinners we used to have at—

MRS. NEWTON. [*Quickly*] Yes, I remember—I remember.

MR. NEWTON. I'm afraid I bore you. [*He puts his cap on the small table, and lights a cigarette, first offering the box to his wife.*] Will you have one?

MRS. NEWTON. No thanks—not now. Well—

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

Jerry—amuse me. I expect people who dine with me to amuse me. What do you know that's new and interesting? [*Mr. Newton sinks into a chair, and blows rings.*]

NEWTON. New and interesting? Not a thing.

MRS. NEWTON. Hear that! Heaven be my witness, there is no virtue in wasting a nice little *diner à deux* on your own husband, if he refuses to tell you things!

NEWTON. "Things" is a trifle indefinite. Do you want news, poor dear recluse? Politics, art, literature, gossip, scandal, truth—what shall it be? [*Mrs. Newton sits down opposite him.*]

MRS. NEWTON. [*Meditatively*] Politics, art, literature, gossip, scandal, truth. Well, I'll have a little of everything, thank you.

NEWTON. By the way, have you run across that tale about Walton and Mrs. Starkweather?

MRS. NEWTON. Oh—so you dined out. Was it with Mrs. Dalton?

NEWTON. [*Looks at her*] Why? What made you think of that?

MRS. NEWTON. It's my system—it's very simple. Shall I tell you about it? [*He smiles at her, amused.*]

NEWTON. Do—by all means.

MRS. NEWTON. I haven't a bit of use for women who pry—I wouldn't think of asking where you went last night—and yet, I almost always know. If you talk politics—I say to myself—"Evening at the club." If it's art or literature—in the abstract—I conclude—"Evening spent with some of his impecunious geniuses." Gossip—and

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scandal—that's easy—dinner or a function. Truth—[*Laughs*] well—Heaven only knows what I would suspect if you talked of truth. [*Mr. Newton rises, with a faint smile, and walks up to the fireplace, into which he flicks his ashes.*]

NEWTON. Do you mean to say that my actions are daily subjected to this—this—system? You pump your victim and then draw conclusions?

MRS. NEWTON. Exactly. It's painless to the victim, and effective in bringing about immediate results. [*Mr. Newton comes slowly forward and stands by his wife's chair looking down at her.*]

NEWTON. I didn't suppose you cared a hang where I spent my evenings, as long as I didn't bother you.

MRS. NEWTON. [*Quickly*] I don't.

NEWTON. Oh, yes you do—or else you wouldn't take so much trouble. Hereafter, I shall tell you every day of the world, where I spent the preceding evening.

MRS. NEWTON. Absurd—I wouldn't listen.

NEWTON. Yes, you would. We might exchange confidences. Confessional—your dressing room. Time—ten a. m. You confess me and I confess you. What do you say? We don't see any too much of each other these days, and it might be amusing. A tourney in truth-telling.

MRS. NEWTON. A tourney in truth-telling? You know, I'm not so sure I could tell the truth if I tried. Truth is such a dampener to a really imaginative nature—truth is so crude!

NEWTON. It's a magnificent idea—to my mind.

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Let's begin now—the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Shall I begin?

MRS. NEWTON. No—I'll begin. No—no, I won't either—you begin. You're to tell everything you did last night.

NEWTON. All right. But if I begin, you're to listen, and not spend the time making up whoppers about what *you* did last night.

MRS. NEWTON. Cast out suspicion from your black old heart. If this is a truth contest—we've got to believe each other. Now go on, I'm prepared for the worst. [*Mr. Newton paces to and fro, as he talks.*]

NEWTON. Well, I dined at the Annex with Cobden, went to the club after dinner, played billiards until eleven, and poker from eleven to one. [*Barker appears at the door.*]

BARKER. Some one to speak with you at the telephone, Mr. Newton, sir.

NEWTON. Can't come; Barker say I'm busy. You take the message. [*Barker goes out.*]

NEWTON. At one o'clock I came home, and went to bed. True and uninteresting account of a virtuous and tiresome evening. [*Barker appears at door.*]

BARKER. It's Mrs. Dalton on the wire, sir. She wants to know if you carried off her gloves last night by mistake, and if so, will you bring them with you to the theater tonight?

NEWTON. Say to Mrs. Dalton, please, that she must be mistaken about the gloves, and that I shall not be able to join her at the theater.

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BARKER. Yes, sir. [*Barker goes out. Mrs. Newton laughs, and rises.*]

MRS. NEWTON. "A true and uninteresting account of a virtuous and tiresome evening." Possibly we had better agree upon some definition of truth, before we go any further with—our game.

NEWTON. Just wait, Nance, until you hear the story, before you——

MRS. NEWTON. Don't—I beg of you, don't try to improve upon the tale—it's good enough as it stands! Dutiful Ulysses dining at home with patient Penelope tells her the true tale of his wanderings. And always while the hero tarried and sang with the Siren, he longed for home and Penelope, didn't he? It's the same old tale—always the same. It's dished up to us in every generation. And we always swallow it—that's the lovely part of it.

NEWTON. Must confess I don't see any *close* resemblance between you and Penelope. If you would allow me about three words—— [*Mrs. Newton starts toward the door.*]

MRS. NEWTON. Don't spoil the situation by explaining. It's good enough for a play. There's one thing I would like to say while we're on the subject. I don't care a farthing for your flirtations, Jerry, and I'm not a bit jealous, but I do think the way that Dalton woman acts is a little too much. I haven't a thing on earth against the woman, except that she's the silliest little cat I ever knew. If she amuses you—why, you're easily amused. The way she acted the other night at the Rush-Pattens was nauseating. Now, if you

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want to have your flirtations with this, that and the other woman, for goodness sake pick out somebody we both like!

NEWTON. That we both like! Well, you are rich. [*Mr. Jerry Newton leans back and roars.*]

MRS. NEWTON. I'm glad you're so amused, and in order that I may not longer detain you from Mrs. Dalton's box, I'll withdraw. [*Mr. Newton rises deliberately, marches up to her, takes her firmly by the arms, and leads her to a chair. Then he pulls his own chair opposite her.*]

NEWTON. My dear girl—this situation may be good enough for a play, but don't let's make a farce comedy out of it.

MRS. NEWTON. I have no desire to listen to explanations.

NEWTON. [*Quietly*] The story I told you about last night was absolutely true. I did go to the club, after dining at the Annex—the only thing I omitted was an incident so trivial that I had forgotten it.

MRS. NEWTON. [*Derisively*] Forgotten it?

NEWTON. Exactly. On the way out of the Annex we met the Daltons. We talked about three minutes to them and she asked us to join them at the theater tonight. I declined. Why she telephoned—I can't imagine.

MRS. NEWTON. *And the gloves.*

NEWTON. There you have me—I confess the gloves are beyond me. I have no gloves, and never have had any gloves belonging to Mrs. Dalton. [*Mrs. Newton laughs. He comes toward her swiftly.*] You don't believe me. I've told you the

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truth absolutely. The incident at the Annex took some three minutes. I agree with you that Mrs. Dalton is a silly, stupid woman. But poor little goose, think of any human creature being married to Dalton—and be merciful!

MRS. NEWTON. So it's mercy—untempered with justice. She doesn't amuse you then?

NEWTON. Frankly she bores me almost to death, but I'm deuced sorry for her. [*He leans over her chair, and takes her hand.*] You see, old lady—it was pretty much ado over nothing.

MRS. NEWTON. So it was. I was stupid—I'm sorry, Jerry, let's call it quits. Shall we go on with the truth game?

NEWTON. By all means. [*He makes himself comfortable, and lights another cigarette.*]

MRS. NEWTON. It's my turn, now. Last night I dined at home. I was to have gone to the Martins with Peggy at nine—

NEWTON. Pardon. Dined at home—might one ask if you dined alone?

MRS. NEWTON. Yes. Mr. and Mrs. Peggy and Jack Harrington were to have dined here, but I was out of sorts, so I phoned Peggy to keep Jack with her for dinner and pick me up later. Then I decided I wouldn't go at all—so Marie telephoned them, and I went to bed.

NEWTON. Ah, that's all, is it?

MRS. NEWTON. Um—hum.

NEWTON. But—where does Harrington come in?

MRS. NEWTON. [*Glancing at him quickly.*] He comes in later.

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NEWTON. So I understood.

MRS. NEWTON. Might one ask how?

NEWTON. Certainly. Mr. Peggy grew weary of the Martin brand of party, and turned up at the club. He was good enough to mention that Harrington reconsidered when you shook the crowd, and had joined you here. Of course, it was information I relished.

MRS. NEWTON. Why shouldn't you relish it?

NEWTON. Now, I don't give a rap who you dangle, Nance, if that sort of thing amuses you, but that sap-headed Harrington—I will not stand for.

MRS. NEWTON. Will not? Who asked you to stand for him?

NEWTON. [*Hotly.*] Will not—is what I said. It doesn't look very well to my thinking to have him hanging at your heels from morning to night. I think it was all fired impertinent of him, showing up here last night after you'd dismissed him, to spend the evening!

MRS. NEWTON. He didn't spend the evening.

MR. NEWTON. Well, I think it's time he was put down the coal-hole! [*He starts toward the door. Mrs. Newton looks at him, half serious, half amused. A smile flashes across her face, and is followed by a look of great concern.*]

MRS. NEWTON. Jerry—don't go—I want you to listen to me—I want you to know about it. Mr. Harrington did come last night, but he couldn't stay but a minute—

NEWTON. Oh, he couldn't, couldn't he?

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MRS. NEWTON. He said he longed to—but—he—he didn't dare.

NEWTON. Didn't dare—now look here—there are limits. What did the cub mean?

MRS. NEWTON. [*Weakly.*] I really can't say—I told him—I told him—

NEWTON. Well—well—what did you tell him? Out with it. [*She starts toward the door, and stops at the threshold.*]

MRS. NEWTON. I told him that I really couldn't stand him "Fridays, and Saturdays and all"—I told him that he amused me so intensely that I couldn't bear it—and that the worst of it was, that when I was so amused I sometimes became unmanageable and—threw things!

NEWTON. But he—

MRS. NEWTON. Wait. He stood here—just here in the doorway—with his hat and his poor little broken heart and he said—"I long to stay—but I don't dare." [*Mrs. Newton laughs gayly and goes out. Mr. Jerry Newton starts after her hastily, his face like a storm cloud. He thinks better of it, stops, smiles—then laughs, takes another cigarette, and calls—*]

NEWTON. Nance—Oh, Nance. [*Mrs. Newton's head appears at once at the door.*] What are you doing there?

MRS. NEWTON. [*Promptly.*] Waiting to be called back.

NEWTON. Oh, very well. I didn't call. [*He takes up a book and turns leaves.*]

MRS. NEWTON. I said—called back—not—

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down! [*She comes and leans on the back of a chair watching him. Presently he looks up.*]

NEWTON. Have you really dismissed that cub?

MRS. NEWTON. Well—I *think* he took it for a dismissal.

NEWTON. How about Jenks? [*Mrs. Newton points to regions below, with her thumb.*] And Scott—and Harry Laurence? [*Mrs. Newton repeats the gesture, with such vigor that he follows the direction of the thumb.*] Hum—Where?

MRS. NEWTON. [*Solemnly.*] In the coal-hole!

NEWTON. Really? And you're not in love with any of them?

MRS. NEWTON. [*Sighs.*] No.

NEWTON. [*Suspiciously.*] Nor with anybody else?

MRS. NEWTON. Well—I don't know—

MR. NEWTON. W—H—A—T? Some new one? [*She nods and comes and sits on edge of his chair.*]

MRS. NEWTON. I'm afraid—I'm ashamed to tell you—it's so absurd. You won't believe me—but it's the solemn truth.

NEWTON. We don't seem to have much luck with truth. Truth is—you never really loved anybody in your life.

MRS. NEWTON. Well—I do now.

NEWTON. What? What? Who is it? Who is he?

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MRS. NEWTON. Don't laugh at me, now—
Jerry—don't laugh at me. It's you—you dear
old goose—it's you!

Tableau.

CURTAIN.

THE CHILD IN THE HOUSE

THE CHILD IN THE HOUSE.

A SATIRICAL SKETCH.

CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Thorpe.....an authority on modern child study
Mrs. Lang.....
Miss Reeves.....
Mrs. Brown.....an old fashioned lady, 70 years young
Jenice Thorpe.....a modern child
Time—Present.
Place—Mrs. Thorpe's drawing room.
Costumes—Modern.

SETTING—*Mrs. Thorpe's Drawing-room. Mrs. Thorpe at center at tea table pouring tea as curtain rises. The other women are grouped about, Mrs. Brown at right down front, Miss Reeves near table, Mrs. Lang left center.*

MRS. LANG. [*Sipping her tea with a sigh.*] Oh—this is the pleasantest hour of the day—the tea hour. Thank Heaven, one can't take tea with an ulterior motive! I declare, I've had such a day—my reading club met this morning, and of course, I *had* to see that performance of "Ghosts" this afternoon—and the result is my cerebral remnants refuse to coördinate! [*All laugh.*]

MISS REEVES. You poor dear—why just sitting through "Ghosts" is effort enough for one week! [*Takes tea from Mrs. T. and goes to Mrs. Brown.*]

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

MRS. BROWN. Thank you, my dear. How hard you children do make it for yourselves!

MRS. THORPE. Do we not? Why, just being up to date is the work of a lifetime. You must have politics, literature, art, science at your finger ends—on your tongue's tip. Of course, we're artificial—life's too short to be anything else.

MISS REEVES. I just envy the woman of fifty years ago—she hadn't a problem on earth!

MRS. BROWN. My dear, don't delude yourself into thinking anything of the sort. Your grandmother's life wasn't any simpler than yours is. The only difference is, she was content to do one thing well, instead of dabbling in many. To be a good wife and a good mother was to her the paramount duty, and she did it without question!

MRS. LANG. And we question—and don't do it—there is a difference, isn't there? But do you really believe, Mrs. Brown, that she *did* do it without question?

MRS. BROWN. The average woman—yes—I think so.

MRS. THORPE. 'And was the world any better then than it is now? [*She goes to Mrs. B. and takes her cup.*] Let me fill it again.

MRS. BROWN. The world was certainly more comfortable then, than it is now. When I compare the results of, say—my mother's life, and that of a mother of today, I'm inclined to say it was better then. Just look at the difference in the children for instance. The old-fashioned child was taught a few good rules—honesty, respect, obedience—at least, he knew what those words

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meant, and I confess, I sometimes doubt whether the modern child ever hears of these things.

MISS REEVES. Now, Mrs. Brown, I would have granted you an illustration on any other subject, but our one claim to superiority lies in the work we are doing in child study—a work that is bringing about the most wonderful results.

MRS. BROWN. When—now?

MISS REEVES. Not now, perhaps—but the future will show what wonders can be accomplished by the sensible natural treatment of the child.

MRS. BROWN. In the meantime—thousands of little souls are being ruined. [*Mrs. Thorpe brings another cup of tea to Mrs. B.*]

MRS. THORPE. Now, I take issue with you there, my dear friend. Take—well—take Jenice. She's been brought up on the theory of natural development.

MRS. LANG. And Jenice is such a dear child!

MRS. BROWN. [*Skeptically.*] And the result is satisfactory?

MRS. THORPE. Thoroughly. She has never been forced to do anything she didn't want to do. She has always been reasoned with. When she is naughty, I simply make the result of her misdeed recoil upon her, and so I develop in the child a moral sense. I never demand respect. I show her that respect for others and courtesy are two things necessary to make society possible. So you see, she develops these things naturally of her own accord. In short—it is working from within, instead of coercing from without.

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

MISS REEVES. It's making a reasoning human being, instead of a little barbarian caged in by restrictions!

MRS. BROWN. [*Shaking her head.*] You complain that life is too complex—and then you make your children reasoning human beings at ten! I'm afraid I'm old fashioned enough to prefer the restrictions without the reasoning. [*Mrs. Thorpe draws chair near Mrs. Brown.*]

MRS. THORPE. You see, dear old-fashioned lady, even our children have become "problems"—one of the numerous problems that are thrust upon us! [*Wild screams from without.*]

MISS REEVES. [*Springing up.*] What on earth is that? [*Door flung open, Jenice enters.*]

JENICE. Mamma—Mamma—I want you to come at once and send Marie away. I've discharged her and she won't go. [*Mrs. T. rises and goes to Jenice at center.*]

MRS. THORPE. Jenice, I'm surprised at you. Don't you see these ladies?

JENICE. [*Covers her eyes.*] No—no—I don't see them. I won't see anybody until you send Marie away.

MRS. THORPE. What did Marie do?

JENICE. She won't obey me—she won't do what I tell her to, and she shan't stay in this house another minute unless she promises to mind!

MRS. THORPE. Jenice, I want you to leave this room, until you can act like a lady. Do you hear me?

JENICE. Why, yes, of course I hear you.

THE CHILD IN THE HOUSE.

MRS. THORPE. Well, then, obey me. [*Jenice stands still, so Mrs. T. attempts to put her out.*]

JENICE. Aren't you ashamed to pull me around like that? Do you think you're acting like a lady? [*Mrs. T. and Jenice speak in undertone at door.*]

MRS. BROWN. [*Smiling.*] I'm relieved to see that "reasoning" is sometimes reinforced!

MRS. THORPE. [*Leading Jenice.*] Mrs. Brown—this is Jenice. Shake hands with Mrs. Lang, dear.

JENICE. I know you. How's Arabella?

MRS. LANG. She's well, thank you, dear. You must come and spend the day with her.

JENICE. No—siree—she's the meanest kid in this whole block. I'd like to slap her face for her about thirteen times—the old slob! [*Consternation among guests.*]

MRS. THORPE. Jenice, that's very rude!

JENICE. Being rude, means telling the truth—I won't do it again.

MRS. THORPE. This is Miss Reeves, dearie.

JENICE. Oh, you're the one, are you? Papa said you'd been trying to catch a man for twenty years, have you? [*Mrs. T. drags her toward door in desperation.*]

MRS. THORPE. Now, run away, dear—run along to Marie—

JENICE. [*To Mrs. L.*] What do you wear that funny little hat for? It looks like—

MRS. THORPE. Jenice—did you hear mamma—run away now—

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

JENICE. [*Seats herself at table.*] I wish to stay and have tea.

MRS. BROWN. Don't you think that tea spoils little girl's dinners?

JENICE. No, I do not. What were you all chattering about when I came in?

MRS. LANG. We were talking about polite children.

JENICE. [*Eating sugar.*] Humph—Arabella's bad enough!

MRS. BROWN. Your mother was telling us how polite you were, and how considerate of other people's feelings!

JENICE. [*Sternly.*] Did you tell them that?

MRS. THORPE. Yes, I did, but they won't believe me now.

JENICE. They oughn't to—lies are always found out, you know. I'll take three lumps of sugar.

MRS. BROWN. Better not, dearie—you'll have a stomach ache.

JENICE. I'd rather have the stomach ache—and have the sugar.

MRS. LANG. Will you come here and talk to me a little bit?

JENICE. [*Inspects her solemnly.*] Oh, yes, I think I will. [*Goes and sits by Mrs. L.*]

MRS. BROWN. The reasoning faculty is certainly developed!

MISS REEVES. [*In conciliatory tone.*] How old are you, Jenice?

JENICE. Ten. How old are you?

MRS. BROWN. What do you do all day—play?

THE CHILD IN THE HOUSE.

JENICE. Certainly not. I go to school, dancing school, and take singing, fencing and French.

MRS. LANG. My—what a busy little girl. Can you sing?

JENICE. Of course, what do you suppose I take lessons for?

MISS REEVES. Will you sing something for us? [*Jenice marches to Mrs. Brown.*]

JENICE. Do you wish me to sing?

MRS. BROWN. [*Highly amused.*] Yes, indeed. [*Jenice sings little song, either unaccompanied, or with Mrs. Thorpe at piano.*]

MISS REEVES. That's very pretty, indeed.

JENICE. I don't like you—I wish you wouldn't look at me.

MISS REEVES. Why?

JENICE. Because, I think you're so ugly!

MRS. THORPE. Jenice—Jenice—what do you mean—

MRS. BROWN. [*Rises.*] I think I must go, Mrs. Thorpe. I'm so glad to have found you at home, and to have met your daughter, who is being brought up on the "natural theory." [*She puts her hand on J.'s shoulder.*] The theory is doubtless a good one—but I think I'm a little sorry for the child!

JENICE. You don't like me, do you? But I like you—I think I want to kiss you!

MRS. BROWN. [*Kisses her*] Thank you, dear. Mrs. Lang, I shall be glad to take you along with me—plenty of room, you know.

MRS. LANG. Thanks—if I thought I wouldn't crowd you—

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MRS. BROWN. Not at all. We'll say good afternoon then. Come and see me soon, and bring the daughter. [*Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Lang go out.*]

MISS REEVES. I must be off too. Goodbye, Jenice.

JENICE. I won't shake hands with you.

MRS. THORPE. Don't mind her, will you? I don't know what is the matter with her today——

MISS REEVES. Oh, I don't mind. Goodbye, my dear. I suppose I'll see you at the Mother's meeting in the morning. [*Exit. Mrs. Thorpe drops in chair and hides her face in her hands.*]

MRS. THORPE. Jenice, Jenice, how could you act so? You'll break my heart, if you go on like this! [*Jenice stands before her, hands behind her back.*]

JENICE. I'm sorry to see you cry—but you always get punished if you're mean. That was all a lie about Marie. I stood outside the door and yelled because I knew you were having an old tea party and I wanted to punish you for taking that book away from me this morning.

MRS. THORPE. I explained to you that that book was not a book for you to read.

JENICE. I'm a reasoning human being, and you know it—you've told me so often enough. Besides, you took the book away from me, and didn't act like a lady, and so you had to be punished. I'm sorry! [*She marches out.*]

CURTAIN.

THE LION AND THE LADY

THE LION AND THE LADY.

A Play in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

Henry Earlsford, an impetuous, hot-headed actor.

Lady Margaret Mandeville, a charming, piquant "lady of quality," who amuses herself by masquerading as a serving maid.

Scene—Henry Earlsford's Study. Luxuriously furnished, with many books, handsome rugs, a writing table, a huge leather couch and comfortable library chairs. A fire burns on the hearth. A large bust of Shakespeare, on a pedestal, is the dominating feature of the room. There is a small table with a decanter and glasses and a paper-strewn library table.

SETTING. *Earlsford's study. Enter Lady Margaret Mandeville, in quiet street gown, bag in hand. She looks about cautiously, before entering, then seeing no one, dashes in.*

LADY MARGARET. Mrs. Dobbs—Oh, Mrs. Dobbs—why, she isn't here! Well *you're* here, Lady Margaret Mandeville—*you're* here—this is your new place! [*Laughing*] I wonder what part I'm to play in this farce. [*Puts bag on table, and sits down in arm chair.*] Incidents of the Prologue—[*Counting off on fingers*]. No. 1. Margaret Mandeville, aged twenty-five—of some experience and discretion, falls in love like any school girl, with Henry Earlsford, actor. No. 2. Margaret Mandeville sits next Henry Earlsford at dinner, and hears him indulge in pleasantries such as these [*Imitating his manner*]: "The

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women of our aristocracy lead the dullest lives in the world. They can know nothing of real active life, because they have no originality—and if they had, they would never defy convention enough to act upon the original idea.” Lady Margaret fights his statements all the way. He concludes the conversation by saying: “Madame. I have yet to find that delightful possibility—an English woman of title, who dared to act upon an impulse!” [*Gets up and walks about, staring at things.*] Now, that’s the end of the prologue! The comedy begins! Act I. [*She comes to front*] Lady Margaret’s madness takes shape. She answers the advertisement of one, Mrs. Dobbs, for a housemaid, because said Dobbs is Henry Earlsford’s housekeeper. Result of agonizing half hour of catechism by Dobbs: “Well, my dear, you don’t seem very smart, but you’ve a nice face—and we’ll try you. Come on Monday, with your bag!” And here I am—bag and all—but no Dobbs! [*Deep voice heard without, No, no; certainly not.*]

LADY MARGARET. [*Catching her breath*] Oh, dear—oh, dear—there he is! [*Grabs her bag and dashes out door at left, as door at right opens, and Henry Earlsford stands on the threshold.*]

HENRY E. [*Sternly to Dobbs, without*] I don’t care if he’s been here forty times—tell him I’m out. Admit no one, Dobbs. I wish to be alone. [*Closes door and strides in, puts his hat on rack by door at right. Brushes the hair off his brow in the true Irvingesque way; then comes front.*]

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EARLSFORD. [*Pacing to and fro.*] If I might only retire during the day into some secluded hole in the ground, where I'd be free from the army of poor playwrights, with poorer plays for me—poor actors wanting to support me, poor stage struck girls wanting to love me, poor titled ladies wanting to pet and exhibit me! Bah! [*Throws MSS. he carries in hand on table, and sits down wearily in arm chair.*] These the diversions of the day—at night a thick skulled audience damns me' best efforts, because me' walk, me' neck, me' elocution is not of the conventional cut! And when, for an instant, Fate seems to smile upon me, and places me at a stupid dinner next the only woman in the world who ever really attracted me, I find out later that I've been talking to Lady Margaret Mandeville, when I thought she was an American, and I recall with joy me' whole conversation was concerning my conviction of the stupidity of the English woman of title! [*Angrily*] Well, she led me on—what right had she to let me make a fool of myself—who *is* this Lady Margaret Mandeville? [*Just as he thunders her name, the lady in question appears at the door at left, daintily gowned as a housemaid. She carries a carpet sweeper and a duster, both of which she drops with a clatter, upon hearing her name. He turns angrily and looks at her.*]

EARLSFORD. Who are you?

LADY M. [*Her head high at his tone.*] I'm Lady Mar—[*Complete change to tone and manner*]*—Peggy!* [*Courtesying as an afterthought.*]

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EARLSFORD. [*Grimly.*] Remarkable — Lady Marpeggy!

LADY M. [*Recovering herself—courtesys again.*] You didn't 'ear me, soir—Mrs. Dobbs didn't tell me 'as 'ow you wuz deaf. [*Very loud.*] My name's Peggy, sir, and I'm the 'ouse-maid!

EARLSFORD. Nonsense, woman—I'm not deaf! What are you going to do with that? [*Pointing to sweeper.*]

LADY M. [*With despairing glance at it.*] I dunno, sir. [*Catching herself.*] I mean—I'm to brush up a bit, sir.

EARLSFORD. [*Tragically.*] Leave the room—I told Dobbs to admit no one. I will not have the cleaning done while I am in the house! Am I to have no peace?

LADY M. I 'opes so—sir—but please don't send me off—I'm so afraid of Mrs. Dobbs, she's cruel stern with us servants! I'll sweep very quietly—quietlike. [*Earlsford throws himself down on couch at left, MSS. in hand, and begins to read.*]

EARLSFORD. [*Distract.*] Leave the room, I say. [*Lady Margaret stands at back a moment, undecided; then begins to examine and try to work the sweeper. Instead of pushing it, she pulls it after her like a wagon. Of course it leaves a string of dirt behind. She finally sits down on the floor in a heap, and turns the thing upside down and looks at it. Earlsford becomes conscious of some one in room, and sits up on couch, peering over back at her. Finally thunders at her.*] What—are you still there?

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LADY M. [*Jumps and catches her breath.*]
Yes, I am—I mean I are! [*Holding sweeper out toward him.*] Do you know how this thing works? [*She says "woiks."*] [*She comes down front and pulls thing once across stage.*] Now, look—it all spills. [*He sits gazing at her in rapt amazement. Impatiently.*] Don't you see—it—it leaks, sir! [*He sits up, throws back hair from his brow, stalks forward and takes sweeper from her.*]

EARLSFORD. [*Pushing it.*] Of course, it spills if you pull it backwards.

LADY M. [*Taking it.*] Oh, I see—it goes forwards—front'ards!

EARLSFORD. Didn't you ever see a sweeper before?

LADY M. Not that kind—they allus had pulley ones, where I worked before at—at Lady Mandevilles!

EARLSFORD. [*Eagerly.*] Mandeville — Lady Margaret Mandeville?

LADY M. [*Beginning to sweep.*] The soime, sir. D'ye know her?

EARLSFORD. [*Going back to couch.*] Slightly.

LADY M. [*Glancing at him.*] Don't loike her—do ye—well, I don't believe she'd loike you—either. But I allus loiked her ladyship—she were allus koind to—us servants. [*She upsets chair. As he looks back in annoyance.*] Don't let me bother you, soir—it's nothin' but a chair. [*Goes at it noisily again.*] Yes, she wuz good to us—Christmas 'op in the servants' quarters, and all that—but la—I don't henvy 'er, soir, does you?

EARLSFORD. Why don't you envy her, Peggy?

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[*She begins to dust. Then carefully fixes up disordered desk.*]

LADY M. O, Lor'—she's a stupid toime of it, sittin' up there in her draring room, bein' so proper an' fine. She don't [*Flick, flick with the duster.*]*—she don't know nothin' about real life, sir.*

EARLSFORD. [*Sitting up suddenly.*] That's just what I said!

LADY M. [*Looking back at him.*] What—sir?

EARLSFORD. I was saying—that you seemed to be a person of some discrimination for one of your position.

LADY M. Thank'ee, sir; I does discrim a bit.

EARLSFORD. You what?

LADY M. Discrim—ain't that the word you said, sir? [*He picks up his book again, smiling, and begins to read. Lady Margaret dusts the tongs—looks over at him, smiles and hangs them on a hook over the mantelpiece. Then she dusts his hat, and puts it on bust of Shakespeare at a rakish angle. She talks as she works—he never looks up.*] There's only one thing I henvy 'er ladyship, an' that's the theater—she goes every night. I fancy she's got a case [*Pronounced "coise."*] on some actor or other.

EARLSFORD. Got a what?

LADY M. Coise! [*He shakes his head, uncomprehendingly—she says impatiently.*] Coise of softs.

EARLSFORD. Coise of softs? [*She nods cheerfully.*]

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EARLSFORD. [*Getting light.*] Oh, you mean she likes some actor!

LADY M. [*Gazing at him in silent admiration.*] My eye—but you're sharp—soir.

EARLSFORD. [*Gets up and goes toward her.*] Do you know who he is—have you any idea? [*She nods, she goes up to him, gets on tip toes to whisper in his ear, in loud stage whisper.*]

LADY M. It's Mr. Sidney Carteret!

EARLSFORD. [*Turns away, and goes across stage slowly, saying*]: Sidney, must you win everything with that merry smile of yours. Ah, well, ah, well—[*Goes off into deep sigh.*] [*Lady Margaret, during this speech, has been following close on his footsteps with the sweeper, and when he turns he stumbles on it.*] [*Angrily and dramatically.*] What do you mean, Impertinence? Take that away—take it away. Now leave the room—out of my sight!

LADY M. [*Holding her ground.*] But I 'oint through.

EARLSFORD. Silence!

LADY M. But how are you goin' to know what I'm thinkin' if I cawn't speak? I 'oint an actor!

EARLSFORD. I don't want to know what you are thinking—go! [*She goes slowly, dragging the sweeper, humming "Last week down our alley, come a toff," etc., slams the door.*]

EARLSFORD. Impossible—most impertinent. I won't have her about with her saucy ways. [*Looks about, then in tone of deep surprise, even horror.*] What does this mean? Is the girl mad? [*Angrily.*]

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Well, we will see about this—we will see. [*Strides to door at right, calling.*] Dobbs—Dobbs, I say, [*No answer, he strides to door at left, calling there; still no answer.*] Where is the woman—what is the matter in this house—surely the times are out of joint! Mrs. Dobbs! Mrs. Dobbs! [*Goes out door at right, still calling. Door at left opens cautiously, Lady Margaret's head appears, then shoulders, then she comes in. Earlsford without calls "Dobbs."*]

LADY M. [*With mock bow to door at left.*] Well, you won't find Dobbs out there, my very dear sir, because she's gone to the vegetable stalls—tra-la. [*Skipping forward.*] Well, it isn't such bad fun—if it only wasn't for Dobbs. My, didn't I catch it for being so long at that sweeping! [*She seats herself comfortably at the table, crosses her feet and leans back—picks up MSS. he has tossed on the table.*] Oh, ho; a new play. [*Turns over leaves.*] It really was very clever of me to think of having served at Lady Margaret's. He was so anxious to draw me out, and so afraid I'd see it. [*Laughs merrily.*] And he did look so funny when I said Sidney Carteret! [*More laughter. Enter Earlsford quickly.*]

EARLSFORD. [*Explosively*] Dobbs!

LADY M. [*Smile frozen on her face.*] Oh, dearie me. [*Earlsford sees her, strides forward and faces her furiously.*]

EARLSFORD. What are you doing here? What does this mean? This is in a line with your conduct—you—you baggage! What are you doing in my study?

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LADY M. [*Weakly*] I'm a—I'm a sittin' here!

EARLSFORD. [*Folding his arms.*] Well, what do you mean by sitting here?

LADY M. [*Crossly*] Well, I didn't know you'd be back so soon!

EARLSFORD. [*Throws back head and laughs sarcastic laugh.*] Oh, ho, she didn't know I'd be back so soon. [*Sees his MSS.*] What! Reading my private papers, eh?

LADY M. Oh, is this a private play? I thought plays was 'allus public! I like it very much. [*Handing it to him.*]

EARLSFORD. [*Elaborately.*] Undoubtedly it would delight the playwright to hear it.

LADY M. [*Solemnly.*] Tell him then, won't you?

EARLSFORD. [*With sweeping gesture to room.*] Just look at this room! [*She turns a complete circle, slowly, looking round and then facing him, a half dazed, uncomprehending smile on her face.*]

LADY M. Yes. [*With sigh.*] It's grand—oint it?

EARLSFORD. [*Sternly*] Is that the place for the tongs?

LADY M. [*Great surprise*] Oint it—it's the 'andiest place I could find for 'em. [*Goes to them.*] Just reach up for 'em—like that—see? [*She puts them in the stand.*]

EARLSFORD. [*Arms crossed and head lowered. Sincerely*] Worse than that—worse than all else—you have offered an insult to the inspiring genius of this place!

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LADY M. [*Immense surprise.*] I did—I? Why, I didn't see 'im.

EARLSFORD. [*Seriously*] The gross insult—defiling that noble brow—with my hat!

LADY M. [*Naïvely, but not flippantly.*] Oh, that old boy—why, I thought 'e was the 'at-rack! [*She goes and stands on tiptoe to take the hat down. Earlsford watches her—standing a little to right of bust and front. She stands, the hat in her hands, left of it and at the base, looking up at it.*]

EARLSFORD. Poor, ignorant girl—know then, that *He* is the Master Artist, who moulded a mammoth figure, and called it Drama—breathed into it his soul, and gave it life; put in its breast the passions of all humanity—into its mouth, words silver-toned and trumpet-tongued. *He* is the Titan of the Ages! [*Lady Margaret stands spell-bound, breathless, as the splendid voice rings out the last words; then she says with low voiced intensity.*]

LADY M. Genius!

EARLSFORD. [*Catches her word.*] What?

LADY M. [*Stands off from bust, as if in fear.*] Is—is he really all those?

EARLSFORD. [*In tone of suppressed emotion.*] And now, go. I don't want you here another moment—you have annoyed me to such an extent that I am thoroughly upset! Now—go!

LADY M. [*Almost in tears, but still playing her part.*] I won't deny to you soir, that hits pretty hard on a goyle (girl) to serve satisfactory to a man that's a ragin' lion one minute, an'

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a great gen-i-us the next! [*She curtesseys and goes out. He stands a moment, where she left him.*]

EARLSFORD. Interesting! Perfectly virgin soil—no esthetic ideals—no experience—no conception of art—no conventional standpoint, and yet, she seems of better clay than most of her class—more intelligence, and all that—well, well, this mail must be opened. [*Goes to desk and begins to poke about among things.*] [*Annoyed tone.*] What's happened here? Nothing in place. I mean, everything in place. Some one has been cleaning up. [*Calls*] Dobbs—Dobbs. [*Bangs bell.*] [*Enter Lady Margaret.*]

LADY M. Did you ring, sir?

EARLSFORD. I did. [*Points to desk with shaking hand.*] Who—who has dared to put my desk in order?

LADY M. I did, sir.

EARLSFORD. You did? Is there anything else you can do to annoy me? If there is, I wish you would get at it at once, so that I may hope for a little peace tomorrow!

LADY M. It needed cleanin' up, Lor' knows—it was a sight.

EARLSFORD. [*With nervous impatience.*] I want it so—I want it a sight! I wish you to know that no one—do you understand that—*no one* is to touch a paper or a blotter or a scrap on this desk, no matter what its condition!

LADY M. [*Forgets herself and bursts out.*] Good Heavens—how I'd hate to have to live with you! [*Earlsford springs up, shouting.*]

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EARLSFORD. What?

LADY M. [*As if terrified.*] I said—I'll remember, sir—soir!

EARLSFORD. [*Aside*] Ah, cockney accent an afterthought. [*Turns and looks at her intently.*]

LADY M. [*Nervously*] Is that all, soir?

EARLSFORD. [*Amused smile.*] Yes, you may go now—Peggy! [*She goes out—he sits a moment tapping desk with pen handle.*] Who is that girl like? She's marvelously like some one, but I can't seem to think whom. [*Opens letter and spreads it carefully out before him.*] One sentence of perfect English, fairly flung at my head, and then a relapse into cockney again. [*Expression of surprise.*] How stupid of me—why didn't I think of it before—this is some stage struck girl who is masquerading under my roof. Ah, ha, ho, ho—well, my lady, you'll earn your wages while you're here. Blockhead that I am, I might have known. [*He takes the ink bottle, gets up and looks about, then smiles, goes to table, and pours ink into the empty decanter on table. Then rings loudly, reseats himself and is busily writing when Lady Margaret enters.*]

LADY M. Well, what is it?

EARLSFORD. Don't you know enough to fill the ink well when it's empty?

LADY M. Empty? Why, it was full up this morning.

EARLSFORD. Well, it's empty now. [*Sternly*] Fill it! [*She goes out, and the minute she disappears he rings again.*]

LADY M. [*Without*] In a minute, soir.

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EARLSFORD. Come at once when I ring! [*She enters hastily with bottle.*] Get me a biscuit and a glass of sherry—I'm utterly exhausted! [*She hurries off and gets biscuit, goes front, pours out glass of ink from decanter, puts it beside him and exits. He laughs silently, unconsciously takes a sip of ink, then sputters and bangs bell. As she appears, he shouts.*] Water—water—you've given me poison! [*She dashes off and on with glass of water.*] Where did you get that stuff?

LADY M. There—Mrs. Dobbs said there was some left in the decanter. Was it sour, soir?

EARLSFORD. It was. Go make me a cup of tea. [*She goes out, and returns with tea things, which she places on table, then sinks into chair, with sigh.*]

EARLSFORD. [*Smiling behind her back. Speaks sternly.*] Servants do not sit in my study.

LADY M. [*With calmness of despair.*] Well, I'm too tired to stand up! [*He goes on writing, looking at her smilingly, now and then. She makes tea, banging things around.*]

LADY M. [*Aside.*] I wish I could make it out of vinegar! [*Slams down cup.*]

EARLSFORD. [*Sternly.*] Don't be so noisy!

LADY M. I'd just like to throw it at him! [*Making feint with cup.*]

EARLSFORD. [*Looking up.*] Mrs. Dobbs is calling you.

LADY M. Why, I didn't hear her.

EARLSFORD. Well, I did. Hurry up, Peggy, and don't leave my tea to stand. [*With a sigh she hurries out, and he immediately rings. She*

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comes in.] You are worse than the proverbial snail! Do you labor under the delusion that I want tepid tea? [*She flies back to table, fusses with the things and drops into chair again. Pours out his tea for him.*]

LADY M. Here's your tea! [*He laughs quietly, comes front, takes it from her, and stands watching her, while she unconsciously pours out a cup for herself, tastes it, then looks up and sees his amused smile. She chokes, coughs, puts cup down hastily.*]

LADY M. Oh—I forgot.

EARLSFORD. Forgot what?

LADY M. That I—I—H'excuse me, soir! [*He takes sip of tea, then breaks out tragically.*]

"'Tis burnt; [*Another sip*] and so is all the rest!

What stuff is this? Where is the rascal cook?

How durst you, villian, bring it from the dresser,

And serve it thus to me, that love it not?

There, take it to you, trenchers, *cup*, and all."

LADY M. [*Indignantly*] Burnt? Why, it 'oint.

EARLSFORD. [*Continues*]:

"You heedless jolt head and unmannered slave.

What, do you grumble?

I tell thee it was burnt and dried away,

And I expressly am forbid to touch it,

For it engenders choler, planteth anger;

And better 'twere that both of us did fast,

Than feed us with such oversteeped leaves!

Be patient—tomorrow it shall be mended

And for this day we'll fast for company"!

[*He calmly takes her tea away.*]

LADY M. [*Laughs*] You—Petruccio!

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EARLSFORD. You think I wouldn't make a good one?

LADY M. [*Springs up in alarm.*] Is—is that all, soir?

EARLSFORD. [*Smiling*] That's all—Peggy! [*She goes out door at left hurriedly.*] Who is she like? That toss of the head—that profile. [*Quick change of expression from deliberation to delight.*] No—no, it can't be; but yes, it is! Lady Margaret herself! Here, under my roof, and making sport of me! And how I've made the poor woman dash about! [*Throws back head and roars.*] Paying me up for my wise words about the aristocratic lady, eh? [*Rings.*] I ring for Lady Margaret Mandeville to come to me! [*Lady Margaret enters and he greets her at door with low bow.*] Pray, enter my sanctum, Lady Margaret.

LADY M. [*Comes front quickly.*] [*Aside.*] He suspects me. Well, I'll play him a scene, now. You wanted somethin', soir?

EARLSFORD. Take this seat, the one nearest the shrine, you see. [*Pointing to the Shakespeare.*]

LADY M. [*Looking scared.*] Thank you, soir. [*She subsides into chair indicated, and he stands before her.*]

EARLSFORD. If I had not been such a numbskull I would have suspected your true identity before this, my most welcome guest.

LADY M. Oh, soir, that's grand—go on!

EARLSFORD. [*Earnestly*] Shall we not throw aside this foolish jest? Surely we've played it out. Must there always be misunderstandings

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and mistakes between us? That first night, at Lady Warden's dinner, I'd no idea to whom I was speaking. I thought you were an American—the most beautiful, the most attractive woman I had ever met. It was only afterwards when I discovered who you were, that I realized how utterly tactless my words must have seemed to you, Lady Margaret.

LADY M. Now, what do I do? Am I to play Lady Margaret? What do I say about this dinner?

EARLSFORD. I see—you're punishing me. Say: "Poor, stupid man, I forgive you."

LADY M. Oh, is that all I say? I don't like to forgive and forget ladies. I'd rather be the adventurer!

EARLSFORD. Will you never cry quits to the adventure? What more would you have? You stalk the lion to his lair [*Gesture including whole room.*], you see him take food, you pull his hair, and rumple his mane, and make him roar—you even force him to chase you—then when he has proved how strong he is, you get him in a corner and make him feel actually—foolish! Will you please put the noose about my neck and lead me out?

LADY M. Me? Oh, but I don't want a lion. I haven't any place to keep him. Besides, they're treacherous.

EARLSFORD. [*Smiles.*] I've heard that tame ones were quite—affectionate.

LADY M. [*Promptly.*] That settles it—I wouldn't have one that didn't roar all the time.

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Let's play something else. I'm tired of the lion.

EARLSFORD. [*Earnestly.*] Do you believe, Lady Margaret, that great love can come in a moment, like lightning? That in a flash a heart can know its master?

LADY M. [*Makes weak final effort.*] What—what play is that from, soir?

EARLSFORD. Play? It's not from a play, dear. It's the most earnest thing in my life. Ah, Margaret, all the love of all the heroes I have ever played is pent up inside of me for you—all the beautiful lines I've ever spoken, are struggling on my lips—and I can't say them— [*Voice of Dobbs heard off stage. Lady Margaret rises in alarm, then runs back to door.*]

LADY M. [*At threshold.*] Dobbs must be the call boy, for she's always callin'. [*Exit hastily left door.*]

EARLSFORD. [*Indignantly.*] Dobbs ordering her about—the idea! We'll see— [*Starts for door, as it opens and she returns demurely enough.*]

LADY M. I've—I've been discharged! Dobbs says I'm the laziest hussy that she ever saw, and I'm to pack at once. Those are her very words!

EARLSFORD. Dobbs dared—

LADY M. She did. So—have you any orders before I go, soir? And what about me wages? An' will you recommend me?

EARLSFORD. My orders are—first—sit in that chair. What will you accept as pay?

LADY M. What do you offer?

EARLSFORD. [*Seriously.*] The little house here—Dobbs—some fair prospects, my Shakespeare,

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my heart's love—[*Puts out his hands to her.*]
and myself!

LADY M. I think—I'll act on another impulse
and accept! [*He takes her in his arms.*]

EARLSFORD. And you insist upon recommendations—sweetheart?

LADY M. Yes, as a lion tamer!

CURTAIN.

SUCCESS

SUCCESS.

A Play in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

Mrs. St. Albans.

Jerome Steever.

Scene—Mrs. St. Alban's Garden. Time—noon.

[*Enter Jerome Steever, preceded by a servant. Steever is a man of thirty, of the student type—a man who was intended for an optimist, but warped by fate, or circumstances, into a grim humorist. He is conventional in dress, but shabby. Not actually frayed—but of the well-brushed variety.*]

STEEVER. Thank you, James. I will wait for Mrs. St. Albans here, then. [*James goes out, and Steever comes a little unsteadily to a garden seat.*] I never would have believed that an empty stomach could knock a fellow out so. Why, it's beastly, the way we have to depend upon that miserable organ. Talk about the importance of the brain—it's nothing to the importance of the stomach! [*He looks at the violets he carries.*] You poor little flowers, do you realize that you are breakfast, lunch and yesterday's dinner? Well—you're too pretty to eat! [*He sits down and begins to take off his gloves.*] We'll get off one glove at least, so she won't see how mended they are. They say Love is blind—[*Inspects himself.*] it's a pity she doesn't love me! [*Mrs. St. Al-*

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bans appears at the back of the garden. She stands looking at him a moment before she enters. She is a graceful, well-bred woman, of thirty, every detail of dress and bearing suggesting luxurious habits and surroundings.]

MRS. ST. ALBANS. So you've penetrated into my bower, have you, Mr. Jerome Steever? [*He goes toward her, his face alight.*]

STEEVER. A fair good morn—my lady, and sweets to the sweet. [*She smiles as she takes his hand, and the flowers.*]

MRS. ST. ALBANS. A dear little bunch of flowers, and a compliment—see how well I begin my day!

STEEVER. Am I so early, then?

MRS. ST. ALBANS. For the busy bee—no; for the drones—yes.

STEEVER. Don't speak of that hateful insect. I've always had a grudge against the busy bee.

MRS. ST. ALBANS. I think my simile was rather well chosen—for you and the bee **are** quite alike. [*Smiling.*] You know when you watch the bee, and he thinks you're watching him, he just hums and loafes along, as if he had no more interest in making honey, than he had—in—in you!

STEEVER. The bee and I act as if we had no interest in *you*, do we? What lusty liars!

MRS. ST. ALBANS. And the bee works steadily, unwaveringly toward that end for which he was put into the world. The bee, my friend, is really your brother—a seeker after success!

STEEVER. But the bee is destined before birth

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to succeed—but I——. Well, if you're seeking out my relations—I should say that Failure might be called my twin sister! However, there's some distinction in failure, when attainment is so commonplace. Success—it's the red ball—the plaything of the multitude.

MRS. ST. ALBANS. But you——.

STEEVER. My dear lady, I was born to watch. I can't play the game or catch the ball. I never caught anything in my life!

MRS. ST. ALBANS. What an intangible element it is, that brings attainment! Take two men with equal brains and equal chances—one slaves all his life and wins neither fame nor money—the other, without effort, leaps into the very midst of success! Now, what is it—why can't we locate it, and give it a name?

STEEVER. And kill at birth all the children who have it not. Simple—and what a stride for the world! It would mean the Golden Age with a vengeance.

MRS. ST. ALBANS. [*Smiles.*] Write a play about it—and let your hero be the man who discovers the ingredients of success. Speaking of plays, what have you been doing since I saw you last?

STEEVER. [*Grimly.*] I've been going from place to place like a literary tramp, trying to get managers to hear or read my play. They don't want plays—they have plays for years ahead—they can't afford to experiment with a production by an almost unknown man. That's my story—

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my epitaph—"Jerome Steever, ambitious playwright—snubbed to death by frigid managers!"

MRS. ST. ALBANS. There's no prospect then of—

STEEVER. Prospect—what on earth is that? I haven't had a prospect for so long that I don't know the definition of the word. [*Mrs. St. Albans looks at him closely.*]

MRS. ST. ALBANS. Jerome, are you quite well?

STEEVER. Quite, thanks—why?

MRS. ST. ALBANS. I was wondering if you could bear up under good news.

STEEVER. Can't promise. The shock of novelty, you know—

MRS. ST. ALBANS. Henry Newman is going to hear your play tomorrow morning—at ten o'clock, at his office.

STEEVER. [*Quickly.*] What? Newman—the Newman? Manager Newman? Ah—don't joke about it—I've quite lost my sense of humor!

MRS. ST. ALBANS. Joke, my dear friend—it's true.

STEEVER. And you did this for me—I owe it to you?

MRS. ST. ALBANS. [*Hastily.*] You owe me nothing—nothing—

STEEVER. I owe you nothing! You, who have encouraged me, and believed in me, when no one else in the world did, you who have taught me to grow through defeat—ah—Louise—I can't tell you—I was right, you see, the shock was too great for me. [*He turns from her and goes toward the gate, his head bent.*]

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MRS. ST. ALBANS. Jerome, you are so strong—and yet so weak! You poor, blind poet, you read hearts so badly. You dare, as few men dare to face the world and rate it at its true value, and yet you fear its paltriest convention—the dictum that a man may not ask a woman to love him, if he's poor. Dear poet, will you understand if I point out to you what I see? [*Steever turns and comes toward her smiling tenderly.*]

STEEVER. I'll try.

MRS. ST. ALBANS. Well, I see a long, uphill road—and half way up, a woman climbing. I saw her first a headstrong, impulsive girl, setting out alone, with a jewel-case of ideals. She was full of the courage of youth—she thought she could kick aside the boulders on the road. Poor, foolish child—the rocks were so firm, and she only stumbled on them, and cut herself and fell. But she struggled along, undaunted, clinging to her ideals, until she's half way up! There's a man on the road, a good way ahead of the woman. He's bruised and torn, but his shoulders are squared, and his head held high, and always as he goes he looks back toward her. If he would only wait for her a minute—if she dared to cry out to him, they might climb on, over the rocks, hand in hand, helping each other. But now—now. Life's best gift—happiness—is slipping through their outstretched fingers, because the strong man is a coward, and proud, and the woman—the garrulous woman is silent!

STEEVER. But the rocks *he* falls on, she might have avoided. Would you have him add to her

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stumbling blocks, when he longs so to take her in his arms and carry her over them all? No—no—
[*Desperately.*] Louise, it's taking all his strength to go on—alone!

MRS. ST. ALBANS. Jerome, did you ever hear the fable of the faint heart?

STEEVER. Yes, and the fable of the frog that tried to win the lark with his song! When I can sing—when I've won success with my song—then dear—then—— May I come tomorrow after I've seen Mr. Newman?

MRS. ST. ALBANS. Of course—I shall be all anxiety. Good—good luck, Jerome. [*He takes her hands a moment, looking down at her, then goes hastily. She watches him out of her sight, then smiles tenderly.*] Poor, tired frog—poor, struggling lark!

SCENE II.

SETTING. *Steever's room, bare and dark, save for a light from without, which shines through the window at back. Steever, haggard and emaciated, staggers slowly from the table to the window, and slowly draws the curtain.*

STEEVER. Night again—night. Only twelve hours since I drew the curtain back at dawn—twelve days—twelve years! [*He gets a candle and lights it.*] We must light the banquet hall—and make ready for our guest. Our only guest—Hunger. [*He sits down at the table, his head in his hands.*] Oh, this agony of lumbering time—with nothing to mark it's going but night and day.

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[*Laughs huskily.*] I suppose that's why we eat—to mark time. After breakfast—after lunch—after dinner. It's all foolishness—if you let your stomach alone, it's all right—it's beastly to eat all the time! If you *think* a good meal—it's almost as good as eating it. Roast beef—roast beef! I wonder how long a man can live on meals he eats with his mind, instead of his mouth. I'm a fool—a great fool—but I can't beg for bread! “The strong man was a coward—and proud!” I wonder what day it is? Newman said he'd send me his decision in a week. He said it as if he were talking of the weather. He was saying: “In a week, I'll decide your fate for you!” A week? It's been months—he must have decided and forgotten me. And Louise, what is she thinking of me? I wanted to wait and take my triumph to her—besides I couldn't bear to have her find out that I was half starved. But ah—*she* comes to me! When I look back—she's there—when I look up, she's smiling at me—when I wake, she's standing with her hand on my hair. Dreams—dreams,—the dreams of the dusk—they are worth all the white light visions of the noon! When Newman sends me his answer—success or failure—either way—I'll go to her and say: “Louise—Louise——” [*A tap at the door, but he does not hear it. He summons his strength and gets up, holding to the table.*] “Louise—I love you—I——” [*He sinks back again, his head on his arms. Mrs. St. Albans enters. She stops for one allcomprehending moment, then goes*

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to the prostrate figure, and takes his head in her arms.]

MRS. ST. ALBAN. Jerome — Jerome —
[*Steever looks up vacantly at her and smiles.*]

STEEVER. Ah, yes—you're here again. You've come again. But you'll go way again presently—you'll go away.

MRS. ST. ALBANS. No—not if you want me to stay.

STEEVER. Sweet spirit—if I want you to stay. I want you always—always, but you fade so soon. If I speak to you, if I put out my hand to touch you—you are gone! [*Mrs. St. Albans takes his hands.*]

MRS. ST. ALBANS. See, dear, touch me—I'm quite real. I'm here beside you. Think of all these long days I've watched and waited for you, and here, you've been needing me all the time. I sent for you twice, but the people down stairs told my messenger that you had gone away. But to-night—I made up my mind I would come myself. Ah, Jerome—Jerome, couldn't you trust me, dear? [*He leans his head against her in silence for a moment, still unconvinced of her reality.*] Jerome—

STEEVER. [*Starting up.*] Eh—what is it?

MRS. ST. ALBANS. Do you know why I'm here? Listen—do you hear me? [*Steever nods faintly.*] I made Mr. Newman let me come with his decision. I went to him when I couldn't find you, and asked him about the play. He told me that he had read it to critics, and actors—and how they all raved over it. He told me—Oh, never

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mind what, dear—only this—I've come with your success! [*Seever straightens up, laughing strangely.*]

STEEVER. Success! Success! Don't say that word to me—don't speak it. Listen! [*He gets onto his feet with difficulty.*] Way back, when I ought to have been a child, I was laying the foundation of a life's ambition. I struggled and worked, and at last I tasted a little success. That first poor little play was the blessed chance that brought *you* to me, sweet spirit—but you can't live on fame—it isn't as satisfying as love. And the first play brought so little money—and a man must have more than a soul—to win—he must have a good coat!

MRS. ST. ALBANS. Oh, Jerome—don't—don't! [*He sweeps on, scarcely noticing her, gaining delirious strength.*]

STEEVER. I worked—God knows I worked—but I was hungry a good deal of the time, my brain wouldn't act—and the managers began to laugh at me. They said that first play was luck—I'd lost my grip—they advised me to take a rest. Then I settled down to the last effort—the play Newman has now. I was starving, yes, starving. It was flesh and blood, and heart and soul that went into that play. It was my last throw, Louise, that play was the outstretched hand of a drowning man—the hand that clutched at success to wring it out of the world.

MRS. ST. ALBANS. The end of the struggle has come, dear heart—and you have won. Oh, my dear, my dear—your want and my plenty—or

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perhaps it has been—your plenty and my want. Ever since that day you came into my life, I've been waiting to give you all I had, but you wouldn't ask for your own, Jerome. And now, that the world offers you success—

STEEVER. [*Seriously.*] Success—ah, that word! For years it has been my food, my drink—my life—my God! Wherever I go, asleep or awake, it is always before me. The crowd offers it to me—you Louise, you bring it to me, and I turn to lay it at your feet. It is burned in letters of fire on my brain—and now it's come—now it's come.— [*Puts out his hand as if to sweep away a curtain.*] Louise—where are you? I can't see you. [*Terror.*] Help me, Louise—help me fight off this blindness, this white mist! Success—it's come—but—but—my God, Louise—it's come too late! [*He sinks back, limply in her arms, and Mrs. St. Albans without a cry, kneels beside him, gathering him in her arms, as a mother does a child, who sleeps.*]

CURTAIN.

LADY BETTY'S BURGLAR

LADY BETTY'S BURGLAR.

A Colonial Play in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

Lady Betty Lovejoy, a romantic young thing of a scant number of summers.

Sir Percival Haswell, a swashbuckling youngster.

A Burglar.

Scene—Lady Betty's boudoir. There is a large double window at the back and a door at either side of the room, one at right leading into Lady Betty's bed-room, the one at the left leading into the other part of the house.

Lady Betty, in an altogether attractive negligé gown, is stretched out full length on the couch, a book open before her. She looks straight into the distance, lost in thought. Finally she glances at the book.

LADY B. Why—why—the book is up side down. [*She turns the book over, and looks at it a moment, then closes it with a snap.*] What do I care about the noble Sir Tristram? What is it to me if he wins his fair lady or not? I've my own troubles to fret about. Besides, it always comes out all right in books, the knight kills the bandits and the robbers, and wins the lady—and they live happily ever after. There aren't any bandits or robbers any more.— [*She sighs deeply. A masked man climbs silently thro' window at back, and begins picking up things off of dressing-table, putting them into black bag. He keeps his*

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eye on Lady B, who continues:] The way things really happen, is quite different. Some horrid man wins your heart right out of your keeping, and then does some awful thing to prove how unworthy he is. That's what Percy Haswell did—but he'll never know from me that my heart is in his keeping. I'll never speak to him again—I won't. When he knew how I detested that Flora McNare—that he should fetch her to the ball! And then he had the impertinence to say that he only brought her, because I was going with Sir Willoughby. As if it weren't a very different thing for me to go with Sir Willoughby, and for him to come with that—Oh, men are such wicked, fickle, hateful things! [*She buries her head in sofa cushion. Burglar snatches things hastily. She sits up suddenly and he flies back of screen.*] He said I was a coquette—that I didn't care for him in the least. I said he'd better go back to his Lady Flora—since she cared so much. . . as far as I was concerned he might go forever! I just said that—but I didn't mean it. "Am I to consider that a dismissal, Lady Betty?" said he. "Pray consider it what you like, Sir Percival!" said I. And he marched off—and that was two months ago—it seems two years. [*She gets up slowly, and picks up book.*] Mother says that gossip has it that Percy is drinking himself to death. [*Sadly.*] I wish I could forget about him. [*Firmly.*] I shall forget. I shall go to bed this minute and forget! [*Marches off right. As soon as she disappears, burglar creeps from behind screen. He comes center. Sound of laughter*

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heard without, he runs behind screen again, as a second masked man enters by window. He is like burglar in general effect. He is slightly intoxicated.]

SIR P. [*Leaning out window.*] Away with you. I'm well in, and safely. At the Red Dog at twelve, I'll claim my wager. Adieu—[*Kisses his fingers to them unsteadily.*]

VOICE WITHOUT. If thou should'st need help, Sir Lover, but whistle and we'll come to thee!

SIR P. Away with ye—ye noisy roisterers, ye'll alarm the lady! [*Laughter disappears into distance, and Sir P. comes unsteadily forward.*] Ah—ha—here we are. Safely arrived in the lady's boudoir, and the wager all but mine! [*Comes to couch, looking about him closely.*] The lady's boudoir. [*Puts hand to his brow.*] It's Betty's boudoir—Betty's! [*Looks vacantly about.*] What am I doing here? Oh—yes, the wager. My fortune to a pound that I could beg—win—or steal a kiss from the haughty Lady Betty before midnight. And all to silence that knave Harry Bland, who twitted me for a love-sick swain, who had been played with by a coquette, and cast aside like a torn glove! E—gad—I'll show the rake—[*Picks up little handkerchief from couch, and puts it to his face. It brings him to his senses.*] What am I doing here? What right have I to be here? I'll go—I'll go at once. [*Kisses handkerchief and puts it back on couch.*] I'm not fit to touch thy least belonging—Betty—sweetheart! [*Voice from adjoining room is heard. He drops behind couch, as Lady*

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B. enters. She sits at dressing table, and rumples up her hair.]

LADY B. Oh—ho—I'm weary to-night. Ah—Percy—Percy, why did you teach me to care. [*Sir P. tries to crawl to door at left, and as he rises to go out door, she sees him through the mirror. He is as alarmed as she is, and stands hypnotized. As if to herself.*] Is there a man standing by that door? [*He laughs, then draws two huge pistols, and points them at her.*]

SIR P. [*Quissically.*] Scream—and I'll shoot!

LADY B. Oh, thou *art* a man. I mean thou art a coward in man's guise. What dost thou here, there's naught for thee.

SIR P. [*Significantly.*] They told me this was the *jewel* case.

LADY B. Who told thee that? 'Tis false. There's no case here—nor jewel either!

SIR P. Thy modesty is equal to thy courage, Lady Betty.

LADY B. Oh ho—so thou know'st my name?

SIR P. We—we—we always discover first the name of our—

LADY B. Victim!

SIR P. Patron.

LADY B. Well, what dost thou want of me?

SIR P. [*Starts toward her.*] If I might tell thee. It's such a little thing and yet—so dear!

LADY B. I know—'tis my clothes, and my money, and all my treasures—[*Childishly.*] Put down those things [*Pointing to pistols.*] Is it a habit of thine to stand all night pointing them so? [*He laughs and puts them in his belt.*] Stand on

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that same spot and I'll bring my treasures to thee.

SIR P. [*Points pistols again.*] Stop—thou shalt not pass that door.

LADY B. Dost thou dare say shalt not to me?

SIR P. Lady Betty Lovejoy, I am thy master for this minute. Once, if never again, thou shalt obey me!

LADY B. [*Aside.*] That voice! I wonder if it could be—Ruffian—thou shalt answer to no less a swordsman than Sir Percival Haswell, for this insult! [*Sir P. starts.*] [*Aside.*] Ah—ha—Sir Percy! [*To Sir P.*] My treasures are in that room.

SIR P. Get them. I'll follow thee.

LADY B. Stand at the door, if thou wilt. My word, I will not run away. [*She goes out door at right. He starts for door at left.*]

SIR P. Here's my chance. I'll be off before—
[*As he gets to threshold, she appears.*]

LADY B. Gads—zooks—Sir Robber, I never thought to make thee swear thou would'st not run away. Come, here they are—[*She sighs, and leads way to couch, box in her arms. She sits in couch, he stands beside her, looking for chance to escape.*] Thou should'st take off thy mask to see them well. No? I care not, though I'd like to see thy face. I've never had a real live robber call before. [*She holds the things up before her. Sigh.*] A heart which Sir Willoughby gave me. He said like his own, it had not much value—save this, that both were mine! [*Sir P. crosses arms and taps floor angrily with foot.*] Would'st ex-

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amine it? [*He shakes head.*] A string of pearls from Master Jack Stornway, a brave lad, and a bonny. He said—"Mistress Betty—t'is a lover's rosary—each pearl a vow." *Dear Jack Stornway!* [*Sir P.'s indignation increases.*] A rose from Count Frisetti—that went with a tale of ardent—forgive this trifling. Another heart. A man's glove—that meant a duel. Sir Robber, and all for me. A ring—another ring—a letter—

SIR P. [*Quickly.*] Give it me.

LADY B. [*Looking up at him.*] Thou'rt a strange robber! More interested in a love letter to an unknown maid, than in pearls, two rings, and three hearts. If it wasn't for those pistols—I wouldn't read it thee. [*Reads rapidly, without pause, or expression.*] "My best beloved: Last night when thou did'st come into the ball room, with my roses at thy belt, my roses in thy hair, my heart almost burst with delight. Ah—sweet—

SIR P. [*Snoris.*] That will do.

LADY BETTY. I feared t'would bore thee. [*Aside.*] It did me! There are other letters, and that's all—quite all—see for thyself. [*Holds up box.*] Now, art thou satisfied? Thou hast all my treasures. [*Gets up and walks to table, turning her back on him.*] Take them quickly, and be off! [*She turns presently and he stands where she left him.*] What—not gone yet?

SIR P. Lady Betty—would'st thou buy them all back again?

LADY B. I'm to buy my own again, am I?

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SIR P. Listen—I came to steal—but I stay to beg.

LADY B. T'is a pity to change the role—I liked thee better as the robber.

SIR P. Take back thy treasures, and give me instead one little kiss!

LADY B. I—faith—sir, robbers are a strange lot! Why should'st wish to kiss an unknown woman?

SIR P. Because—thou—thou art like one I loved.

LADY B. And lost—I'll warrant thee. Did'st woo her kisses as thou dost mine—with thine arms? [*Points to weapons.*]

SIR P. Ah, I loved her with all my heart—but she jilted me for a popinjay—a bragging—but why should I tell thee this? Lady, thou art like my love.

LADY B. I see. Thou would'st have this kiss for its reminiscential possibilities. It would seem a harmless kindness to do a poor man.

SIR P. If thou did'st but know—

LADY B. If I do this thing—wilt go at once and leave me?

SIR P. 'Pon my honor, yes.

LADY B. There is honor among thieves then? And if I will not?

SIR P. Then by Heaven, I'll make thee!

LADY B. Ah—now thou art the robber again, and not the beggar! Well, I'll make a virtue of necessity—but I'll do the thing my own way, Master Robber. Stand there. [*She points to place at*

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center. He takes position.] Off with thy coat. [He throws it on couch.] Put thy hands behind thee, so. Now—art ready? [She walks to him slowly, looking in his eyes. He bends toward her, and quick as a wink she seizes the pistols and levels them at his head.] Scream—and I'll shoot!

SIR P. [*Angrily.*] Vixen!

LADY B. Stand where thou art, sir. I don't wonder that thou art fond of these friends—they give one such a feeling of superiority! [*She examines pistols, and he starts for door. She intercepts him.*]

LADY B. Stop—thou shalt not pass that door. Now, take off thy mask.

SIR P. Shoot me, and I'll not unmask.

LADY B. I—faith, thou art a modest man—hast thou a big nose, or is't an ugly mouth? Well, for the once, I'll humor thee. Toward my dressing table—march—sir. [*He backs toward dressing table, looking about for means of escape.*] Keep thine eyes fixed on me, sir. Faith—'tis a sad thing to have to threaten a man with death to make him look at thee! [*When she gets to table, she puts down one pistol, but keeps the other leveled. She scoops out handful of ribbons, scarfs, and ties, tucks them under her arm, picks up pistol, and marches him toward chair down front.*] March—sir—march. We should have a band to play—"Lo—the conquering Heroine Comes." [*She moves chair to center.*] Now—sit down. [*He sits, and she drops on knees behind him, tying him to the chair with the ribbons and ties, talking as she works and pecking at him.*] It

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must be humiliating for a high class robber like thyself to be tied up like this, but it must be done. I'm afraid to leave thee while I go for help. [*He jumps up as she says help, but she yanks him back and boxes him.*] Sit still—don't jump like that. How dost thou expect me to tie thee? . . . Robbing is a strange profession for thee to choose. Hast been a robber long?

SIR P. Not long. [*She laughs behind his back.*]

LADY B. Oh—ho—thou'rt a new one? Well, it certainly is not thy forte. Of course I don't want to preach to thee, now that thou art tied, but I feel that thou'rt making a mistake. Of course, I can see thou art a very common man—thy hands tell me that—and thou hast an ugly mouth, and a wicked chin—[*Laughs softly.*] but if thou'lt promise me to reform, I might find thee employment of a lowly but honest kind!

SIR P. I want none of thy help.

LADY B. Thou hast an ugly temper too. Well, if thou wilt not promise to reform, I suppose I must go call help. [*She stands in front of him.*] I hope thou'rt quite comfortable, Master Robber. . . . Oh, I forgot, in books they always gag a robber. [*Runs to dressing table and comes back with handkerchiefs.*] Open thy ugly mouth, sir. Must I speak twice? [*Tries to open his mouth—he kisses her hand.*] Sir—obey me! [*She puts pistol to his head, and he opens mouth. She crams in handkerchief.*] More room? E—gad, what a receptacle. I marvel thou did'st not carry off my candle-sticks in thy mouth! [*She runs off laugh-*

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ing, taking pistols with her. Sir P. shakes handkerchiefs out of his mouth.]

SIR P. Vixen! I'll warrant she suspects me, and unless I escape she's bound to find me out. [*Struggles with hands.*] She's got me tight enough with her furbelows. [*Struggles in vain, finally gets down on hands and knees, and tries again. Then gets up and walks to door at left, chair tied to him. As soon as he is out, the real robber appears from behind screen, blows out candelabra, puts Lady B.'s treasures in bag, and starts for window. Voice heard without—he seizes chair by table, kicks handkerchiefs under it, sits in chair, head on breast, as Lady B. appears. She skips down front and stands before him, hands behind her, with pistols in them.*]

LADY B. Asleep, Master Rogue—or only disconsolate because thy captor deserted thee? Dost grasp thy good fortune, sirrah, in having so entertaining a jailor? [*No reply from robber.*] Oh, I see—dreaming of the one thou lovest and lost. Tell me, Robber, was she fair or dark? Surly knave, hast lost thy tongue? Oh, poor, poor man, thou'rt gagged. Open thy mouth and I'll fish the kerchiefs out. [*Robber shakes head violently.*] Dost thou refuse to obey thy jailor's orders? Hast forgot the touch of cold steel? Open thy aperture of a mouth, sir, or I'll make thee a new one! [*Points pistol at his mouth, and he opens it wide.*] But they're all gone—where are they—didst swallow them? [*He nods violently.*] Thou greedy glutton—two real lace handkerchiefs at a mouthful. [*Looks at him in concern.*] Dost feel badly?

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[*He nods.*] Speak, man, speak, art dumb? I'd better have sent for a doctor, with all that linen in thy insides. [*Robber starts, moves chair, and discloses handkerchiefs. She drops on knees and fishes them out.*] Oh—ho—thou'rt a liar too. I've a notion to shoot thee here and now. [*Quickly.*] But—how didst thou get them there when thou'rt tied?

ROBBER. With my teeth.

LADY B. Thy teeth? Truly, that's a marvelous mouth of thine! [*She goes and sits on arm of couch and looks at him.*] Well, thou art a liar, a robber and a thief—and I shall give thee up to justice, and yet, thou art a man—thou hast loved—who knows what brought thee to this—who'll be thy judge? [*Sighs.*] Well, not I. [*She comes and stands in front of him.*] Perchance thou mayst be gentler to thy next victim, remembering one who was gentle to thee. See, I give thee what thou didst beg me for—before they take thee away. [*She kisses his cheek. He starts up, and she points pistols at him, holding one by the muzzle. Enter at left Sir P. still struggling with chair. Comes front.*]

SIR P. Lady Betty—I'm at thy mercy. I've struggled in vain with this infernal chair of thine. Thy hands, like thine eyes, bind me fast! [*Lady B. looks from one to other, levels pistol at each and screams.*]

LADY BETTY. Oh—dear—Oh dear—two of them—help—

SIR P. [*Angrily.*] Who art thou, sir?

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

ROBBER. That's my business.

SIR P. E—gad, sir, then I'll make it mine. What mean you by thrusting yourself into this lady's boudoir?

ROBBER. I mean the same as thou!

LADY B. Who art thou, pray, to constitute thyself my protector?

SIR P. I am one who wishes thee well.

LADY B. I care not for anonymous knights. [*Goes to him, and unmasks him.*] Sir Percival Haswell! So thou hast selected a profession at last? I congratulate thee.

SIR P. I selected a profession long ago—'twas love. But, come, let's settle with this knave. Untie me.

LADY B. I see no reason to untie thee. Two knaves enter my boudoir, one can turn a pretty speech—and the other cannot. Well, both are knaves, and both my prisoners.

SIR P. Might I suggest then that thou turnst thy pistol t'other way round, if it should go off 'twould spoil thy triumph.

LADY B. [*Turns it hastily.*] I need not thy directions, sir. Sit down. [*She motions, and he drops on his chair, at left.*] And thou—there—[*Points to chair. Robber sits. She stands between them. Gravely.*] Of course it is the duty of every citizen to hand over to justice offenders against the law. It is very painful to me to have to be an instrument of justice—[*Both men start up. She levels pistols, they drop.*] But I hold the pistols! Before I call the guard, hast anything to say, sirrah?

LADY BETTY'S BURGLAR.

ROBBER. The jig's up. Call 'em in, Lady. It's good day to you, Lady—will you kiss me again?

SIR P. [*Starts up.*] Again? Did'st kiss that ugly brute?

LADY B. [*Brandishes pistol at him.*] Down, sir, and wait thy turn to speak. I kissed the robber—because—because I wanted to. Now, what hast thou to say?

SIR P. Lady Betty—I did not come here to rob you—but—

LADY B. Ah, so thou wouldst make excuse. [*To Robber.*] Master Robber, thy blood may not run so pure and blue as that in this gentleman's veins, thy scutcheon may not be so fair, but by me faith, I like thy spirit better. Go—thou art free—but thou, Sir Percy—shalt answer for this. [*Robber gets up, looking from one to other.*]

ROBBER. I'm to go free, Lady? [*She nods, and points to window.*] Good-bye, Mistress, and thankee for the kiss. [*Sir P. starts up, then sinks back, at her gesture. Robber goes out of window, Betty watching him. Then she faces Sir P.*]

LADY B. [*Sternly.*] Sir Percy, thou'rt my prisoner! [*He comes toward her, chair wobbling after him.*]

SIR P. Aye—sweet lady, now and always. Never a minute since I set eyes on thee—

LADY B. [*Laughs.*] Do—do sit down—thou'rt so funny, with thy hump. [*He sits on his chair, and she unties him. He leans his head against her, looking up at her.*] As thou did'st say, the real robber was more gentleman than I—I can never do penance for my presumption—but I was

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

not myself, Betty—I've never been myself since that night—Ah, dear— [*He rises and takes her hands.*] Thou dost make my dark and sunshine, and I've been in the dark so long, Sweet—let me stay on here, in the light—loving thee!

LADY B. [*Sternly.*] Master Robber—how dare you, sir? Sit there! [*He sighs and sits down.*]

SIR P. The same chair of execution—thou art a stern judge—thou must have justice! [*She stands behind him smiling.*]

LADY B. Aye, Sir Percival, justice to the last drop. Thou art a robber, a bandit—a highway-man—a sneak—thief— [*He starts, then drops back, dejectedly. She throws both arms about his neck suddenly.*] And thou art my prisoner! [*She has a pistol in either hand, which she crosses under his chin.*]

CURTAIN.

A DINNER—WITH COMPLICA-
TIONS

A DINNER—WITH COMPLICATIONS.

A DRAMATIC EPISODE IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

Professor James Carton.

Mrs. Carton (Margaret).

Elenor Haskins (their guest).

Peggy Ball (schoolmate of Elenor).

Dr. Richard Henry Waterbury Landis, M. D.

Dr. Robert Landis (nerve specialist).

Scene—Carton's drawing-room.

Time—late afternoon.

[*Peggy Ball in street costume is discovered.*
Enter Elenor.]

ELENOR. Peggy—Peggy Ball—is it really you?
[*Embraces her rapturously.*] You dear, nice, funny little thing, it does me good to see you. Why—it's been years! [*Another hug.*]

PEGGY. [*Straightening her hat.*] It has been two whole years. But you haven't changed a bit—except to grow beautifuller!

ELENOR. You goose!

PEGGY. How long have you been here, and how long are you going to stay, and is Mrs. Carton at home?

ELENOR. I've been here a week and I'm staying a month, and I'm sad to say Margaret is not at home. Now—come over here and tell me every single thing that's happened since we left school.
[*She drags her to couch, where they sit facing each other.*]

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

PEGGY. My dear, it would take years to tell it.

ELENOR. Well, skip through. What have you done with yourself?

PEGGY. [*Solemnly.*] I've grown up.

ELENOR. You? Nonsense—you'll always be "Little Peggy, Pretty Peggy, Baby Peggy Ball!" Do you remember our comic opera?

PEGGY. Well, rather. Oh, didn't we have fun? You never do appreciate school till you get to be an old lady like me.

ELENOR. [*Laughs.*] What about the girls—do you ever hear from Martha?

PEGGY. Yes, she's to be married this month, and it's breaking my heart into little pink bits that I can't go out west and be a bridesmaid. Did you hear about Tootsie's twins?

ELENOR. Twins? Tootsie Tarbell? Ye Gods—what next?

PEGGY. Yes, my dear, a boy and a girl—isn't it howling? And Harriet's the head of a Girls' School! That nearly kills me!

ELENOR. Yes, isn't that choice? How the poor girls must toe the mark!

PEGGY. Of course, she was such a terror herself, she knows all the ropes. But what about you, Nell?

ELENOR. Me? Oh, I'm a creature of no profession—nor calling. I'm a useless ne'er-do-well—a butterfly effect in brown.

PEGGY. You fraud! I know all about your settlement work, and—

ELENOR. That's no work—and one must fill up time somehow. But how about yourself, Peg-

A DINNER—WITH COMPLICATIONS.

gy—have you leanings toward a career? [*Peggy nods.*] I knew it—there isn't a girl in the old crowd except me that hasn't done something elevating with herself. What line have you picked out, Peggums?

PEGGY. Matrimony!

ELENOR. No. Who is he, and when is it to be, and are you happy?

PEGGY. Happy? I'm so happy I could throw myself away!

ELENOR. Perhaps you have?

PEGGY. Elenor! Why, he's worlds too good for me, and I'm the luckiest thing to get him! Elenor—you must marry—it's the only thing to do.

ELENOR. Agreed—what victim do you suggest? Seriously, though, Peg, who is the lucky man?

PEGGY. Well, he's a young doctor with a promising practice, and we're to live here, and he's—Oh—you've just got to meet him, and then you can see for yourself.

ELENOR. [*Promptly.*] There's no time like the present—call him up and ask him to join you here and take dinner with us.

PEGGY. But, my dear, I've never even met Mrs. Carton.

ELENOR. Oh, that doesn't matter. I'm so at home here, I do just as I like. Margaret will be delighted to have you. Come on, here's the phone—you do the rest.

PEGGY. I'd love to. I just adore showing him off. [*She goes to telephone, on table, and takes*

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

up receiver.] Central 330, please — no — 330.
[*To Elenor.*] What about clothes? I'm not dressed for dining out.

ELENOR. Oh—that's all right—there won't be a soul here but the family.

PEGGY. Hello—is Dr. Landis—Oh—is that you, dear? This is—me. Why, I'm at Mrs. Carton's on Liberty street, with Elenor Haskins. Yes, she's the one— [*To Elenor.*] He knows all about you. . . . Well, listen, we want you to meet me here and have dinner. Oh, do, I so want you to know Elenor. Never mind that, she says only the family will be here, and I'm in street clothes, too, so come right from the office. About six forty-five? All right. [*Rings off, and turns to Elenor.*] Isn't that fine? You're sure Mrs. Carton hasn't any other plans?

ELENOR. Quite. She's been shopping all afternoon, and we are to stay quietly at home to-night. Professor Carton has some old scientific convention on for two or three days, and he comes home tired and cross as a bear, so we are doing our going by day.

PEGGY. Well, it's just too sweet. But I tell you, dear, what I think I'll do. It's only a little after five, and I believe I'll run around and see Edith Banks, while I'm in the neighborhood. She's near, isn't she?

ELENOR. Yes, just a block away.

PEGGY. Then I'll be back by six, and we'll have a nice long visit.

ELENOR. All right, Peggums, but don't be late.

A DINNER—WITH COMPLICATIONS.

By the bye, you haven't told me the name of the only man on earth—suppose he comes first.

PEGGY. How stupid of me. His name is Richard Henry Waterbury Landis, M. D.!

ELENOR. Gracious!

PEGGY. Think of my being hitched up to all that! Well, I'm off till six, then. [*She goes out.*]

ELENOR. Same old irresponsible Peggy—child. Think of her being married to a doctor. Mrs. Richard Henry Waterbury Landis, M. D.! [*She laughs, and starts into other room, when street door opens, and Mrs. Carton staggers in, loaded with bundles.*] Oh, hello—Margaret—you back?

MRS. CARTON. What there is left of me is back. [*Sinks into chair.*] “Every suburbanite his own deliverer!” [*Lets bundles roll about her.*]

ELENOR. Why, what's the matter?

MRS. CARTON. I've got bargain prostration, that's all. I've spent five hours fighting and pushing and scratching to get up to counters and pay good money for stuff I don't want. I've worked as hard as any man who scaled San Juan Hill, and now, just as I get to my own door, I suddenly remember that I haven't ordered a thing for dinner.

ELENOR. Margaret!

MRS. CARTON. My dear, I'm callous to your sufferings. Thank Heaven, it's only you. Go call up the butcher and order some chops or something for you and James; as for me I'll gather up my scattered remnants and go to bed. [*Gets up and begins to gather bundles.*]

ELENOR. But Margaret, you can't—I've asked

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

Peggy Ball to dinner. [*Mrs. C. sinks back into chair.*]

MRS. CARTON. Oh Lord!

ELENOR. I'm so sorry—but you see, she was here, and she was so put out at missing you that I induced her to stay—

MRS. CARTON. [*Feebly.*] Where is she?

ELENOR. She's gone to make a call, and later she's coming back. Perhaps I could head her off—

MRS. CARTON. Elenor, you poor martyr! After urging you to ask anybody at any time—I act like this. I'm perfectly delighted to have Peggy, and I'll interview the butcher on the chop question at once. [*Goes to phone.*] South 36. Is this Brown's? This is Mrs. Carton. I want six lamb chops in fifteen minutes.

ELENOR. Better get more than six.

MRS. CARTON. [*To Elenor.*] This is Friday—Mary won't eat any. Connect me with the grocery, will you? Hello, is this you, John? This is Mrs. Carton. I want to give an order. Two dozen Blue Points, a can of Armour's tomato soup, two bunches of head lettuce, can of French peas, can of strawberry preserve and a can of plum pudding. I have to have the things in fifteen minutes. Bring it yourself then, I simply *have* to *have* it. All right. [*Hangs up receiver.*] God bless the man who invented the telephone. Now, I'll board Mary's sweeping day temper, and break the news to her. If you hear cries of "Gaston—Jacques—à moi—au secours!"—don't hesitate. [*She goes out.*]

A DINNER—WITH COMPLICATIONS.

ELENOR. This is a nice state of affairs—the shock over Peggy was so great that I didn't dare mention Richard Henry! [*Enter Peggy.*]

PEGGY. Hello—am I not prompt? Edith wasn't at home, so I hurried back. Has Mrs. Carton come yet?

ELENOR. Just this minute, and she's delighted that you're coming, and she's *so* anxious to meet you. [*Enter Mrs. Carton.*]

MRS. CARTON. My dear, the havoc was awful! [*Sees Peggy.*] Oh, I beg your pardon—this is Miss Ball, isn't it? I'm so glad to meet you at last. It's just sweet of you to come in this informal way.

PEGGY. It's sweet of you to have me.

MRS. CARTON. I love to have Elenor feel enough at home to ask her friends any time.

PEGGY. Oh, that is so nice—some hostesses make such a fuss over you that you feel uncomfortable.

MRS. CARTON. I know. I met a woman today who said to me—"My dear, I'm just worn out. We've had company for a week, and we've been prancing on our hind legs every minute of the time." [*All laugh.*] Oh, good, here's the Professor. [*Enter Prof. James Carton. Mrs. C. goes to him.*] I'm so glad you're early, dear.

PROF. C. Am I? I've lost all track of time. I'm so tired I don't know whether I'm on my head or my heels. That convention—

MRS. CARTON. Well, never mind it now. Come and meet Miss Ball, an old schoolmate of Elenor's

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

who is to have dinner with us. [*She leads him to Peggy.*]

PROF. C. Glad to meet you, Miss Hall!

ELENOR. Ball—not Hall, Professor.

PROF. C. To be sure—Ball. How are you, Elenor?

ELENOR. I'm all right. How did your last meeting go off?

PROF. C. It was ghastly. The paper of the day was handled by Professor Bascom, whom I believe to be an arrant charlatan. It was enough to drive any conservative scientist to madness. Would you believe it, he asserted—

MRS. CARTON. Dinner's almost ready, dear, won't you run along and wash your paddies?

PROF. C. Oh—ah—yes, of course. Dinner, you say? I'd quite forgotten dinner.

ELENOR. [*Laughing.*] Well, the rest of us haven't.

PROF. C. [*Stops at door.*] Oh, by the way, Margaret, dinner reminds me that I asked some one to dine with us tonight.

MRS. CARTON. [*In despair.*] James!

PROF. C. Yes, now who could it have been? name has slipped my mind—

MRS. CARTON. Are you sure it was for to-night?

PROF. C. Yes, Oh—yes. Ah—now I have it—it was Landis—Dr. Landis. [*Tableau.*]

MRS. CARTON. Landis? Not that little whipper-snapper doctor man?

PEGGY. Oh!!

PROF. C. Whipper-snapper is scarcely the epi-

A DINNER—WITH COMPLICATIONS.

thet I should apply—Landis has some very good ideas, some excellent ideas on nerves—and he'll be here at seven. [*Prof. C. goes out.*]

MRS. CARTON. My children, this is fate. We're to be besaddled with a sap headed baa-lamb of a youth, who will talk our heads off— [*Elenor tries vainly to stop her.*]

ELENOR. It may not be the man you think it is, Margaret.

MRS. CARTON. No—such luck, there's but one Landis—for which we give Heaven thanks! Also, there are but six chops. [*Goes to phone.*] South 36. Brown Bros.? Add two chops—no—four chops to Mrs. Carton's order. [*Hangs up receiver.*] Now for another round with Mary. It all comes of being married to the original absent-minded Professor of the funny papers. [*She goes out.*]

PEGGY. [*Angrily.*] Well—Elenor Haskins, I'll get my things and go at once—I'll not stay another minute in the house with that hateful woman. Didn't you tell her that Dick was coming?

ELENOR. Peggy, dear, I didn't have time. She came in just before you did, and I called out that there'd be company to dinner, but I didn't go into detail.

PEGGY. [*Hotly.*] Oh, well, it doesn't matter. I'll call Dick up and tell him not to come.

ELENOR. Oh, now Peggy, please don't do that. Just think how I'd feel. I'm certain that Margaret is talking about some other Landis—it can't be *your* Landis.

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

PEGGY. You heard her say there was only one Dr. Landis.

ELENOR. But in a city of this size—Oh, Peggy, if you care anything about me, you won't go like this. [*Follows Peggy up to door. Peggy bursts into tears.*]

PEGGY. If I thought she did mean Dick—I'd—I'd kill her!

ELENOR. Well, but she didn't. Please, please, come up to my room, and we'll prink a little before Dick comes. Why—I wouldn't have had this mistake— [*Elenor leads her out, door at left, as Mrs. C. enters.*]

MRS. CARTON. I'll be convicted of cook murder yet! This thing of entertaining a lady cook in your kitchen, whose temper has to be considered, and whose feelings have to be eternally propitiated, is a trifle too exhausting. [*Enter Elenor hastily.*]

ELENOR. Well, Margaret Carton, if you haven't put both feet firmly in it now I give up.

MRS. CARTON. [*Dazed.*] What is now?

ELENOR. Oh, nothing, except that this Dr. Landis who is coming tonight is engaged to Peggy Ball.

MRS. CARTON. Engaged to—Merciful Jupiter—strike me dead with a thunderbolt!

ELENOR. Sap headed baa-lamb was only one of the adjectives you called him. Peggy's up in my room crying at this minute.

MRS. CARTON. Why didn't you tell me she was engaged to him?

ELENOR. Tell you? I didn't get a chance.

A DINNER—WITH COMPLICATIONS.

You burst into denunciation before I collected my wits.

MRS. CARTON. [*Desperately.*] Well, what am I to do now? Shall I be taken ill, and not appear?

ELENOR. Certainly not. Just swear that this is the wrong Landis—that you know another one, but you never heard of this one before.

MRS. CARTON. But I know him quite well.

ELENOR. That doesn't make any difference. I've sworn to Peggy that you never have set eyes on her Richard, and that the whole thing is a mistake!

MRS. CARTON. Well, the only thing that will get us through this night is the stiffest cocktail that I can mix. It must be a cup to cheer and to inebriate. [*She hastens out. Peggy enters.*]

PEGGY. I'm hoping that something may have detained Dick—then I can plead a headache—
[*Enter Dr. Richard Landis—Peggy runs to him.*]
Oh Dick—I'm so glad you've come—I mean I wish you hadn't—

DR. LANDIS. Why—Peggy—what's the matter?

PEGGY. Nothing. Elenor, this is Dick—and Dick this is Elenor.

ELENOR. [*Cordially.*] How do you do, Dr. Landis—it's a great pleasure to meet you, and to tell you what a lucky man I think you are.

DR. LANDIS. Am I not? I've scarcely gotten used to my luck, yet.

PEGGY. I do so want you two to like each other, for my sake. Won't you try?

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

ELENOR. Try indeed! I don't feel that it would be so difficult for us to like each other for our own sakes, do you Dr. Landis?

DR. LANDIS. I've begun on that principle already.

PEGGY. Well, don't you like her too well. She's a regular terror. At school we never dared introduce our beaux to Elenor, for she always took them away from us.

ELENOR. [*Solemnly.*] Dr. Landis, do you feel that you ought to run the risk of being kidnaped?

DR. LANDIS. Having been warned, I shall be on my guard. But Peggy here could rescue and protect me.

PEGGY. I won't have you two poking fun at me. Guy a fella' your own size.

DR. LANDIS. You see, Miss Haskins, I'm really marrying her to improve her vocabulary and to give her some education and training. Purely a charity case.

PEGGY. Oh, you wretch—I hate you. [*Elenor and Landis laugh.*]

LANDIS. [*Holding out hand.*] Call a truce, Peggy. We won't tease you any more.

PEGGY. [*Ignoring hand.*] Teasing me? Why—*have* you been teasing me?

ELENOR. Peggy—you've missed your vocation—what heights you might have scaled as a comedy actress! [*Enter Mrs. Carton.*]

PEGGY. [*Stiffly.*] I believe you know Dr. Landis, Mrs. Carton?

MRS. CARTON. No, I've never had the pleasure—

A DINNER—WITH COMPLICATIONS.

LANDIS. [*Advancing.*] Oh, yes, I know Mrs. Carton. [*Tableau.*]

MRS. CARTON. I've heard so much of you, Dr. Landis, and I've always wanted to know you—
[*Landis, dazed, looks from one to another.*]

LANDIS. Thank you—but I, but we—

MRS. CARTON. Do let me offer my congratulations. Of course, you'll come into the suburbs, won't you—all the brides and grooms do. It's lovely in summer, but in winter. . . . I was saying just this afternoon to Elenor—Oh—here's Professor Carton. [*Prof. C. enters, looks at them a second, then advances.*]

PROF. CARTON. [*Surprised.*] Why, how are you, Landis, glad to see you.

MRS. CARTON. Yes, I want you to meet Dr. Landis, dear, he is so fortunate as to be engaged to Miss Ball—

PROF. CARTON. Meet him? Why, I know Landis as well as you do.

LANDIS. [*Stiffly.*] Mrs. Carton has forgotten that we have met before.

ELENOR. [*Cheerfully.*] It's so hard to remember faces, isn't it?

MRS. CARTON. You know I never forget them, so I'm sure you must be mistaken. I know another Landis, but I've never met you before.

LANDIS. Indeed? What Landis is that?

MRS. CARTON. Why—why—the—Landis, the—

PROF. C. Not *the* Landis—the nerve specialist?

MRS. CARTON. [*Relief.*] Yes, of course—the Landis.

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

PEGGY. The sap headed baa-lamb Landis.

ELENOR. Margaret does love "the tingle of an over-statement."

PROF. C. Why, I didn't know you'd met Dr. Landis, Margaret.

MRS. CARTON. [*Desperately.*] Met him? Why, I know him well—the most tiresome old fogey!

LANDIS. I've always heard he was a very brilliant man.

MRS. CARTON. Brilliant men are never what they seem—do you think they are? [*Enter "the Landis." Prof. C. goes to him, hand out.*]

PROF. C. Here you are, Landis. Glad to see you. I was beginning to be afraid that you had forgotten us.

THE LANDIS. Forgotten you? Not at all—I am I tardy?

PROF. C. I don't have to present you to Mrs. Carton, as she tells me you are old friends. [*Tableau. Landis at a loss.*]

MRS. CARTON. [*Hysterically.*] How do you do, Dr. Landis? Now, I know you won't remember me, but you cannot expect me to forget the great Landis?

THE LANDIS. [*Bows over hand.*] Madame, you overwhelm me. I remember our meeting perfectly.

MRS. CARTON. How nice of you. Now pray let me present you to our guest, Miss Haskins, and to Miss Ball, and strangely enough to another Dr. Landis.

THE LANDIS. Indeed? This is a coincidence.

DR. LANDIS. I'm indebted to you, sir, for

A DINNER—WITH COMPLICATIONS.

making our name illustrious. [*Mrs. C. leads "the Landis" aside, while others talk.*]

MRS. CARTON. [*Hurriedly.*] Dr. Landis, I must throw myself upon your mercy—don't show surprise at anything I may do or say, I can't explain the details now—but later at the table.

THE LANDIS. [*Soothingly.*] Exactly—I understand. [*Looks at her keenly.*] May I ask how long this has been going on—this feeling of excitement?

MRS. CARTON. [*Laughing.*] About an hour, I regret to say.

THE LANDIS. Does it occur at the same hour each evening?

MRS. CARTON. [*Surprised.*] Each evening? Mercy no—why—Oh, I see—you think—you think I'm crazy— [*Begins to laugh hysterically.*] Laugh—laugh, Dr. Landis, please—I'll explain later. [*He laughs forcedly, all looking at them in surprise.*]

PROF. C. Can't we all enjoy the joke?

MRS. CARTON. Dr. Landis and I were just reminiscing a bit. That was really very good, Doctor—very good. [*She motions to Elenor to join them. She does so, and Mrs. C. takes the Prof. aside.*]

ELENOR. I'm so pleasantly disappointed in you, Dr. Landis.

THE LANDIS. That's pleasant news. May I ask what you expected?

ELENOR. A stern, bewhiskered gentleman, with spectacles and a rumbling basso profundo, who would lecture us!

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

THE LANDIS. What gave rise to this terrible vision?

ELENOR. Well, Mrs. Carton warned us that you were awfully learned, and impressive.

THE LANDIS. [*Laughing.*] And I'm not a bit, am I?

ELENOR. No, you're delightfully human.

THE LANDIS. Thanks. [*Confidentially.*] You're a very good freind of Mrs. Carton's—are you not? May I ask is she quite—[*Taps forehead*—is she—an invalid?

ELENOR. Margaret? Why, no—what put such an idea in your head?

THE LANDIS. Well, this hallucination about my being an old friend, you know—I never saw the lady before—and she acted rather strangely, and I thought perhaps Carton wanted my opinion on the case. [*Elenor laughs uproariously. Prof. C. looks at them.*]

PROF. C. I never knew Landis was such a joker. [*To Mrs. C.*] Well, I confess I can't make your muddle out, but I'll keep still, and you can manage it as you think best. By the way, I forgot to tell you that Landis is a radical tee-totaler, so don't let Mary bring in wine by any mistake.

MRS. CARTON. [*In despair.*] I'm lost. [*Enter Mary with tray of cocktails, which she passes, everybody taking one, until she gets to The Landis, whom she serves last.*]

THE LANDIS. [*Turning to Dr. L.*] Miss Haskins is just telling me of your good fortune,

A DINNER—WITH COMPLICATIONS.

Dr. Landis. May I offer you and Miss Ball my good wishes?

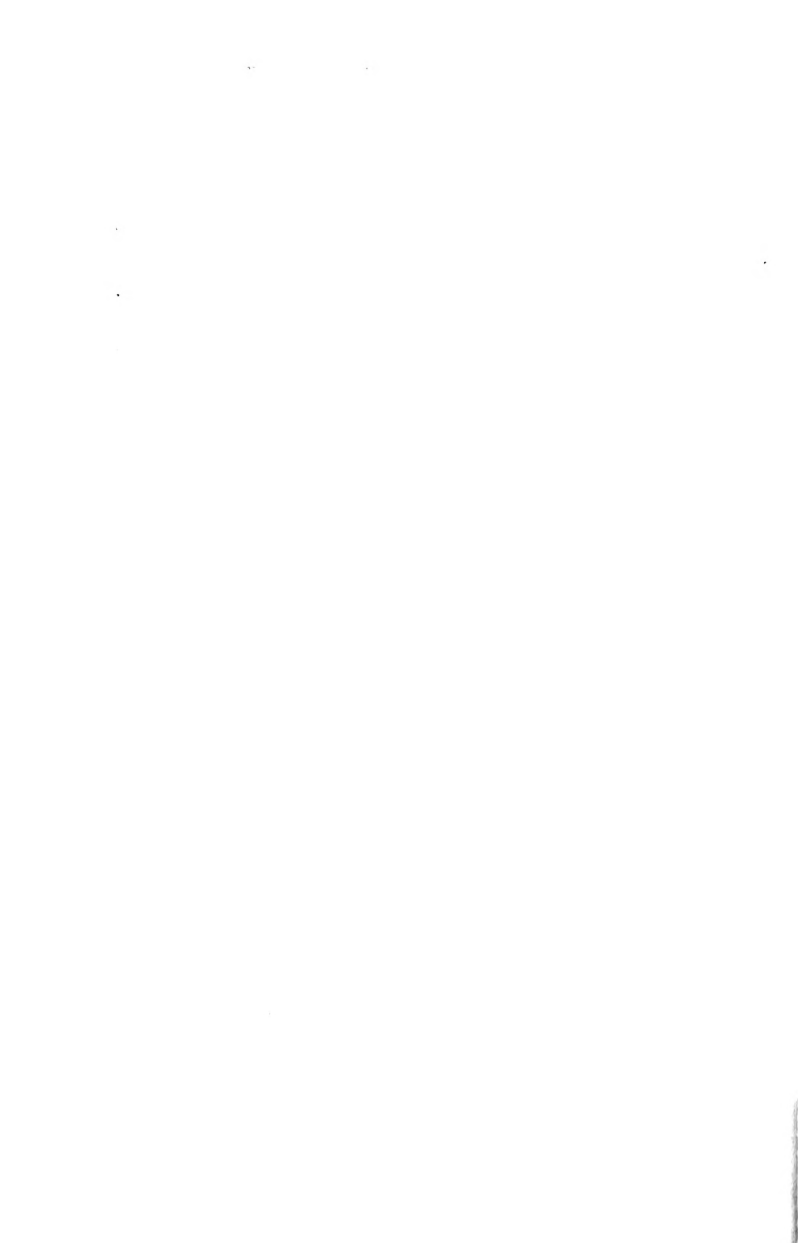
PEGGY. Thanks—it's a great pleasure to accept them, Dr. Landis, we've all heard so much about you, and your wonderful work. Mrs. Carton was speaking of you tonight. [*Vindictively.*] You and she have been friends a long time, years and years, haven't you?

MRS. CARTON. [*Hastily.*] Shall we admit how long, Dr. Landis? [*Mary offers him glass, which he declines, whereupon, Mrs. Carton seizes it, puts it in his hand, to his great astonishment.*] No—our past friendship shall be shrouded in darkness, but Dr. Landis, I call upon you to drink to our future friendship! [*He drinks in spite of himself. Mary stands at door.*]

MARY. Dinner is served, ma'am.

MRS. CARTON. [*Laughs with relief and excitement.*] Oh, Dr. Landis—[*Takes his arm, and stands in the middle of the room.*—will you all come out to dinner? [*All go out laughing and talking.*]

CURTAIN.



REFORM



REFORM.

A PLAY IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

Henrietta Cox, Reformer; strong-minded woman with gentlemanly manners.

Constance Beverly, only partially reformed; a decorative young person of no very decided convictions.

Place—Bachelor-maid apartments, where the two girls live.

Time—Present. Hour—Eight o'clock.

Setting—Library. Exit at center, hung with curtains.

Down right fireplace, with fire burning. Couch near the fireplace. Down left a table with magazines, books, flowers, lamp, etc. Chair on either side of table. Up stage right small writing desk, open and littered with papers. Left of door at center a big chair, or screen, large enough to hide behind.

Costumes—Evening gowns.

Note.—Business is left very much to the discretion of the actors. Scene where Constance throttles Henrietta can be made very funny if Henrietta relaxes entirely, and shrieks each time she is shaken. The idea of the prank must be made very clear to the audience by Constance before she seizes Henrietta's throat. Constance's last speech goes best at center and when she says "we must talk about our clothes" let her drag Henrietta to table, where they sink into chairs on either side of table, facing each other, noses fairly touching.

[*Curtain on empty stage—clock strikes eight. Enter at center—Constance, who stands counting hour, then comes to couch.*]

CON. Eight o'clock—only eight o'clock—three

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mortal hours before I can decently go to bed! [*Picks up book on couch and sinks down, book in hand.*] Ye Gods—how Henrietta and I do bore ourselves! I don't see how she ever got me into this scheme anyway. . . . Oh, it all sounded so fine, in Henrietta's big voice, with all her enthusiasm—"independent life for woman—earning your bread by the sweat of your brow—financial and spiritual independence"—and all that tommy-rot—and then Roger laughed at me so, and *that* made me so mad! [*Rises and crosses to table.*] I really did believe in Reform until I knew something about it, but now—I've had three weary months of it. Henrietta's reformed everything in the house—me—the servants—the furniture—the cat—even Hamlet—the cat—the most detestably superior cat I ever met. I think she feeds him on Force or Grape-nuts—or some of those brain foods. [*Saunters to fireplace and leans on mantel, yawning.*] Oh, dear—I wish Roger were here to—laugh at me! [*Enter at center Henrietta, nose in manuscript. She marches to table, with glance at Con.*]

HEN. Oh, here you are, Constance. I want your opinion on a paper I am to read tomorrow before the Woman's Alliance, a very influential organization, and I want to make my points clearly and definitely. By the way, Constance, have you seen that blue street suit of mine? There were some important notes in the pocket and I can't seem to find it.

CON. Your blue suit? Oh, yes, I saw it—I gave it away!

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HEN. [*Utmost consternation.*] Gave it away? My new suit? Why, I'd only had it a week!!

CON. Yes, I know—but *we* believe in sharing with our sisters, don't we, Henrietta? "Individual ownership is the clog in the wheel of progress; philanthropy has no place in an enlightened world—but a spirit of giving—giving our best—our *very* best"—I think I quote you exactly, Henrietta!

HEN. Well, I do think my second best might have done in this instance. Why didn't you give her your clothes?

CON. Mine wouldn't fit her. Of course, I couldn't force ill-fitting clothes on my sister, could I, Henry?

HEN. Well—what's done is done—To go back to my paper—

CON. What's it about?

HEN. Why—"Reform," of course. Now, after my introduction and premise—I lead up to this—"Therefore, I say—it is an exploded theory that woman is man's equal—it is admitted by all thinking and intelligent people that woman is man's superior! Let her then take her rightful place in the world of affairs—let her cease to consider marriage the end and aim of existence! Let her go forth and taste the freedom that comes to the bread-winner—let her sweep man from her horizon—and dedicate herself to the companionship of high genius—

CON. But all our geniuses are men—Henrietta! [*Scorching glance from Hen, who sweeps on.*]

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HEN. Let her point the way of independence to her shackled sisters—let her prove to them that the only way to develop character and soul is to come from under the baneful influence of Man. It is for woman herself—

CON. Henrietta Cox—that's all balderdash—you've been telling me this for three months and I don't believe one word of it!!! [*Hen. horrified.*]

HEN. Constance—you—what do you mean? I don't understand!

CON. That's just the point—you *don't* understand. Now, Henrietta, do you mean to tell me that you think the three months we've spent here together living the independent life—have been successful? Is this what your soul craves? Oh—Henry—we may work hard all day and fool ourselves into thinking we're improving the world—but what about the long dull evenings, like tonight, when you don't have to lecture—and we're all dressed up in our best dinner frocks and not a soul to see us. Oh, Henry—don't you think a nice comfy man would be a pleasant thing to have about the house? What about these awful in-betweens? [*Hen. marches to and fro, hands behind her.*]

HEN. "In-betweens"—now what on earth do you mean by that? Do be explicit.

CON. You know perfectly well what I mean. And what do you gain by it? Just add a few recruits to the noble army of discontented women!

HEN. There may be something in what you say. I sometimes ask myself "what is the use of

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it all?" [*Catches herself and says hastily.*] But that's when I'm tired—only—when I'm tired!

CON. But you're always tired, Henrietta, and you're simply working yourself to death. Some day—kersmash—and off you go to a lunatic asylum! Ever been to an asylum? Nice cheerful place! And as for financial independence—

HEN. Now, Constance—don't tell me that you haven't enjoyed spending the money made by your very own brain!

CON. [*Laughs.*] Of course, I have—I always enjoy spending money. The trouble is my very own brain doesn't make enough! Besides, I'd every bit as soon spend money made by my father's very own brain—or Rogers!

HEN. Constance, I'm more disappointed in you than I can say—

CON. And as for dedicating yourself to the companionship of great geniuses—Oh Lord, Henry, I'm so sick of geniuses! If a big, normal man would come in at that door this minute and swear at me—I'd—I'd—hug him!!

HEN. C—o—n—s—t—a—n—c—e!

CON. I know—I'm perfectly abandoned! Why, I even welcome that Norwegian slave of yours—the one that spouts Ibsenism—I welcome him with open arms!

HEN. [*Indignantly.*] If you refer to Professor Yorndolf—he is very much interested in our work!

CON. Our work? [*Laughs merrily.*] Why, you dear old goose, do you fool yourself into thinking that Professor Yorndolf cares a farthing

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for our work? Why—he's desperately in love with you! [*Thought dawns slowly in H.'s face.*]

HEN. [*Angrily.*] Constance, I cannot permit this!

CON. Well, it's the truth, anyway—and if you're half the woman I think you are—you'll admit that Reform's a failure and—marry your Yorndolf—he's a real man!

HEN. But you've misunderstood the situation entirely. If Professor Yorndolf's interest in me had been other than—professional—I should have been the first to know of it!

CON. [*Laughs.*] No, my dear—you would have been the last! And while, we're on the subject, I may as well make my confession. I've been thinking over this woman question rather thoroughly these last three months and I've come to the conclusion that there are just two points of view. Either you're a normal woman with a home, a husband and some children, or you're an abnormal creature, with a hobby—a platform and some lectures. All you have to do is take your choice.

HEN. [*Absently.*] Well, I'm not convinced of your truth or your logic—and—[*Warmly.*]—what you have suggested to me about Prof. Yorndolf has agitated me greatly!

CON. [*Laughs.*] Well, what he will soon suggest to you himself will agitate you more or I miss my guess. [*Starts to go out, stops at door.*] Do you know, Henry—I feel that I'm better fitted to reform one man—than I am to waste my time

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on a lot of ungrateful women! [*Exit laughing.*]

HEN. [*Looks into space a moment thinking, then seizes pen and ink and begins to write, speaking line as she writes it.*] "Woman alone can fight the battle of woman"—In love with me—Oh, Constance must be mistaken! [*Writes.*] "Woman alone can carry the banner of freedom"—I remember his eyes, that night he talked to me about Platonic friendship! Oh—absurd! [*Writes.*] "Woman herself"—Oh [*Bites pen in silence*] it's no use—I can't write in this frame of mind. Constance has ruined my work for tonight. [*Goes to couch, and picks up Con's book, opens it.*] Humph—Rosetti's Sonnets—so she's been at this sentimental stuff again. [*Sits on couch.*] Constance is a very disturbing element—she's so irrevocably feminine! [*Swings her feet around on couch like a man, leans back, book in hand.*] "Sigfried Yorndolf"—An abnormal creature, with a hobby, a platform and some lectures—or a normal woman—with a home—a husband and some children. . . . [*Closes eyes.*] Sigfried—Yorndolf—
[*Drops asleep. Enter Constance, who comes toward couch.*]

CON. I say, Henry, did you see that book of mine—Oh—asleep! [*Picks up book, and starts up stage.*] Good night, old lady—I'm off! [*Turns, looks back—runs front and puts book on table, laughing softly—then tiptoes behind Hen., and looks at her—more laughter. Gets well behind her, and grabs her by the throat, shaking her. Hen. sits up and shrieks.*]

CON. [*Deep voice.*] Henrietta Cox, I am a

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desperate Man! If you move or breathe, I'll scatter your brain upon the drawing room rug! [*Hen. shrieks.*] I am the agent of a Union. Our mission is to rid the earth of strong-minded Female Idiots! I am sent by one who loves you—to warn you!

HEN. Sigfried! [*Con. continues, almost convulsed by laughter, and shaking her vigorously every few minutes.*] In the first place, you are espousing a hopeless cause—in the second you've led an enthusiastic young idiot to give up her lover—Roger Sherman—the nicest man in the world [*Hard shake*] to follow your silly dictates—thirdly, in order to take your place as the wife of one Yorndolf—who loves you—

HEN. Sigfried—Sigfried!

CON. I now call upon you to give me your word of honor as a gentleman—that you will never again lecture upon reform. Promise—or die!

HEN. [*Weakly.*] I promise.

CON. One mistake—and you die. Now I will leave you, but if you turn, or speak until I have left the room, I'll play havoc with your cerebrum and your cerebellum! [*Runs up stage and hides behind chair near exit. Hen. runs out crying—"Constance—Constance!" Con.'s head appears behind back of chair, laughing—she goes to table, shaking with mirth.*]

CON. Oh, that was lovely—and the way she squeaked "Sigfried"— [*Enter Hen. hastily, seizes Con.'s wrist and drags her to couch.*]

REFORM.

HEN. Oh, Constance, I've had such a terrible fright!

CON. Fright—what happened?

HEN. Why, I was sitting here reading, and a horrid man—

CON. Man—where is the man?

HEN. Grabbed me round the neck, like this, and threatened to kill me if I didn't give up Reform.

CON. Why—when was this?

HEN. Just a moment ago. And Constance he said—there was a sort of Ku-klux after me.

CON. [*Consumed with mirth.*] Why, Henrietta, I think you must be mistaken. I was in here just a few moments ago and you were sleeping—over Rosetti!

HEN. Was I alone?

CON. Quite—except for me.

HEN. [*Dazed.*] I must have dreamed it.

CON. [*Humorously.*] Yes, you must have dreamed it!

HEN. Constance, do you believe in dreams?

CON. [*Rising.*] Absolutely! And I've been thinking that we'd be a good deal safer if we had a man about this house. . . .

HEN. Constance, are you sure?

CON. About what?

HEN. Sigfried—Professor Yorndolf? [*Con. goes to desk, laughing.*]

CON. Oh, about him? Yes, I'm reasonably sure.

HEN. But how sure?—

CON. Well, one night when you would talk

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to him about Neo-platonism or some frivolous subject like that—he confided to me that he loved you—utterly! [*Rummages in desk.*] Have you seen that—Hello—what's this? Telegram—unopened. [*Comes front, reading direction.*] Miss Henrietta Cox—seems to be yours, Miss Cox. [*Hen. seizes it, breaks seal and reads, while Con. gets book from table and goes up to door.*]

HEN. Constance—wait—wait—read—read! [*Waves telegram at Con., who hurries front.*]

CON. What's the matter? Who's dead? [*Snatches it and reads.*] “Henrietta Cox—Love you madly. Will you marry me? Sigfried Yorn-dolf.” [*Con. shouts, then counts words.*] Just ten words—that's the cleverest thing your Yorn-dolf ever did. Oh Henry, take him—he's a real man. [*Hen. goes slowly to fireplace, tearing up telegram as she goes, tosses it into fire, turns slowly, and says absently.*]

HEN. Constance—when did you hear from Roger?

CON. This morning—of course.

HEN. What did he say?

CON. [*Tartly.*] None of your business. Oh—'pologize. Well—he said—among other things that he intended to marry me the 20th of next month, willy-nilly.

HEN. [*Distract.*] Twentieth. Do you think we could get ready by the 20th?

CON. Henrietta—you mean?

HEN. [*Center.*] I'm going to Reform! [*Con. throws arms about her.*]

CON. Oh, Henrietta Cox—you are a brick! I

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always said Reform begins at home, and if we haven't done anything else we've reformed each other. Oh—Henry—I have a thought—we'll have a double church wedding—troops of bridesmaids, and ushers—Oh—lots of ushers—

HEN. Ushers?

CON. Yes—to ush! And the organ playing—Here comes the bride—Get on to her stride—you know—and Oh—Henrietta— [*Drags her to table where they sit opposite each other.*] We must talk about our clothes.

HEN. Clothes—do we have to have clothes?

CON. Why, Henry, that's the most important part. We'll have to have two white satins with veils—going away gowns, evening gowns, morning gowns, [*Hen. repeats each detail with amazement*] dinner gowns—shirtwaist suits—gloves, hats, coats, shoes—

CURTAIN.

WHEN LOVE IS YOUNG

WHEN LOVE IS YOUNG.

CHARACTERS.

| | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------|
| Mrs. Starr. | } | Scheming Parents. |
| Mrs. Martin. | | |
| Polly Starr. | } | Their Offspring. |
| Dick Martin. | | |

Scene—Mrs. Starr's drawing room. The two ladies are discovered at afternoon tea.

MRS. STARR. My dear Agnes, it's no use. We've gone about the thing in the wrong way entirely.

MRS. MARTIN. I don't see what more we could have done—we've brought them up side by side, next door to each other—they're scarcely been separated a day, except when they went away to school.

MRS. S. That's just the trouble—they know each other too well for a romantic attachment. We must separate them in order to bring them together.

MRS. M. Why not tell them the whole story—how we went to school together, and planned, even then, to live next door to each other when we married and marry our children to each other—

MRS. S. My dear, that would be the very worst thing we could possibly do. Once they suspect that we *want* them to be fond of each

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other, and they'll hate each other from that instant.

MRS. M. But if we told them how we have always wanted the two places to be joined—how ever since our husbands died—we've—

MRS. S. Not a hint of such a thing, as you love me—Agnes!

MRS. M. Well, what are we going to do then?

MRS. S. Oppose their constant companionship at every turn. You select some desirable girl for Dick, and I'll select a man for Polly, and we'll urge their attention in these other directions constantly.

MRS. M. But suppose they should actually act upon our advice?

MRS. S. Never fear! If that method doesn't arouse their interest in each other, I miss my guess.

MRS. M. Well, no doubt you're right—you're always cleverer than I—but it seems risky to me. It would break my heart if Dick and Polly didn't marry finally.

MRS. S. Well, if they did marry and didn't love—I mean if they just married because it was convenient—it would break my heart. [*Enter Polly—radiant.*]

POLLY. Hello—Motherdie. Howdy—do—dy, Aunt Agnes? Am I just in time for tea? [*Mrs. Starr smiles, and pours tea for her.*]

MRS. S. Where have you been, dear?

POLLY. Up in the woods—for spring wild flowers. I've got heaps in the library. Do you

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know it's spring—you two! Real, live, blessed, growing spring?

MRS. M. You look like spring yourself, Polly dear. Did you go alone—or was somebody with you?

POLLY. Nobody—but Dick.

MRS. S. Poor Dick—is he counted as nobody?

POLLY. Oh, of course, he's somebody in a way—that is—well—he's just Dick!

MRS. M. Just the nicest boy in the world—that's all!

POLLY. [*Laughs.*] Oh, well, you're his mother—so, of course, he rather dwarfs any heroes that have gone before! [*Mrs. M. rises.*]

MRS. M. Saucy Polly! What did you do with my boy? Why didn't you bring him in for tea?

POLLY. Two reasons—I didn't want him—and he didn't want to come!

MRS. M. I must go and catch him before he escapes. I want him to make a call with me this afternoon on Mrs. Braddon and Susan. Between you and me, Martha, I've always wished that Dick might become interested in Susan—she's such a lovely girl!

POLLY. Susan Braddon? Why, Dick can't bear the sight of her! [*Mothers exchange significant glances.*]

MRS. M. Well, he doesn't know her very well yet, and she is just the sort of girl he ought to marry.

MRS. S. Yes, come to think of it—I believe

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you're right. She's his opposite in everything—quiet, reserved, dignified—

POLLY. Why don't you say it right out—she's a prig!

MRS. S. Why, Polly, dear!

POLLY. Well, that's what she is. Dick and I can't stand her—either of us.

MRS. S. Well, of course, you can scarcely expect Dick to consult your taste in his selection of a wife.

MRS. M. I must run along. Perhaps I'll be able to convert Dick during the afternoon. Come in to tea with us tomorrow, you and Polly. Good-bye, Polly.

POLLY. [*Absently.*] Goodbye. [*Two mothers stand at door smiling.*]

MRS. S. It works like a charm. [*Mrs. M. goes out; Mrs. S. comes front.*]

POLLY. What a silly idea of Aunt Agnes'.

MRS. S. What idea?

POLLY. About marrying Dick to Susan.

MRS. S. Oh, do you think so? He might do worse. And while we're speaking of Dick, dear, I want to warn you that now you and Dick are grown up, it isn't wise for you to spend so much time together. People will talk——

POLLY. Well—let them!

MRS. S. [*As if changing the subject.*] I had a letter today from an old friend of your father—Robert Agnew. He visited us once years ago, with his little boy—Bob.

POLLY. Bobby Agnew—I remember.

MRS. S. Well, your father and Robert Agnew

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planned that when you and Bobby grew up that they would bring you together in the hope that you might fall in love and marry——

POLLY. Marry Bobby Agnew? Me? Why, mother, how can you suggest such a thing! I hated him. He was a horrible thing—he chopped off a cat's tail once with a hatchet! Dick and I hated him.

MRS. S. What Dick thinks doesn't make any difference as far as I can see. Bob will inherit quite a fortune from his father——

POLLY. As if that made any difference!

MRS. S. From many points of view he would be a desirable match. The point is that Bob is coming east and wants to stop off and pay us a visit next week.

POLLY. Oh, mother, don't let him. I know I'll hate him.

MRS. S. Your father would have wished him to come, Polly.

POLLY. Well, I might just as well warn you, mother, that I'm not going to like him. I'd like to please father, but as long as it can't make any difference to father now——

MRS. S. Polly!

POLLY. I think my first duty in marrying is to marry some one I like myself. Dick and I both think——

MRS. S. It seems to me that there is a great deal of Dick in your remarks. Now, of course, if you have Dick in your mind, it is very unfortunate, because I should never consent to your marrying him for a minute——

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

POLLY. Marrying Dick—what a funny idea—why—what an idea! Of course, I haven't got Dick in my mind.

MRS. S. Well, if you have, let me suggest that you put him out. Neither his mother nor I would be pleased at such a mistake, old friends as we are.

POLLY. Well, to come right down to it, I can't see that it would be such a mistake. I don't intend to marry him any more than he intends to marry me, but——

MRS. S. [*Finally.*] Don't let us discuss any such unpleasant ideas, dear. [*Exit Mrs. S.*]

POLLY. How unreasonable mother is — and how foolish! I'm not going to marry anybody—I'll be hanged if I am! [*Enter Dick—disconsolate.*]

DICK. You here, Poll?

POLLY. Go away. I've got a grouch. I've ordered you off the premises once today.

DICK. Hang it—don't you nag at me, now, or I will toss up the sponge!

POLLY. What's up with you?

DICK. Everything. I think I'll go away—and cut it all.

POLLY. Going away—now isn't that a snap? When a man runs up against anything disagreeable, he gets up and goes away—but a girl just has to sit still and let the disagreeable things run against her.

DICK. What's struck you, Poll? Has Aunt Martha arranged to marry *you* off, *too*?

POLLY. So it seems.

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DICK. *What?*

POLLY. Haven't you heard?

DICK. Not a word. Out with it, Polly.

POLLY. You remember Bobby Agnew—that nasty boy that chopped the cat's tail off?

DICK. Sure. I remember the pup. Well.

POLLY. Well, it seems that Mr. Agnew and father had a nice plan that Bob and I should marry——

DICK. The dickens they did.

POLLY. So next week Bobby is coming to inspect "yours truly" and decide about my possibilities.

DICK. You don't mean it?

POLLY. I do.

DICK. Well, we won't have it. We won't stand for it. I'll tell Aunt Martha it's an outrage. Why, the idea, in a free and independent country like this—if people can't marry the people they darn please, what's the use of staying here? May as well live in Mexico—or China.

POLLY. I'll never marry except to please myself.

DICK. Me, too, Pete. Here mother has got some idea in her head of hitching me up to Susan Braddon—harnessing me for life to that stiff!

POLLY. Oh, I don't know; she's just what you need, Dick—quiet, reserved and dignified.

DICK. Rodents. She may be what I need, but she's not what I want. I told mother she'd have to choose again, and she's all cut up about it. Hang it—mothers are so unreasonable.

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POLLY. Aren't they? [*Sigh.*] I don't see what we're going to do, do you?

DICK. Let's both cut and run.

POLLY. We can't. We're too old—or not old enough—it wouldn't be proper.

DICK. [*Dolorously.*] That's so. It would be all right if we got married, I suppose. [*Brightening.*] By Jove—I never thought of that—we can marry each other, you know, and fool 'em.

POLLY. What on earth would I want to marry you for? I get enough of you now without marrying you for life.

DICK. Well, I'm not dying to marry you, I can tell you. I just suggested it to help out. [*Silence for a second.*]

POLLY. [*Sighs.*] I suppose we might just as well reconcile ourselves to it. [*Sigh.*] The Agnews live in Nebraska or South America or somewhere or other out there. I suppose you could come and visit me, if Susan would let you.

DICK. Susan be——

POLLY. Richard!

DICK. I didn't say it.

POLLY. Well, you looked it. I suppose you'll stay right here at home, you and Susan. [*She chokes up and sobs a little.*] Sometimes, in the spring, when you go out in the woods for violets and hypanicas, I hope you'll think of me.

DICK. Don't, Poll, don't! Why, what would be the fun of going to the woods, if you weren't there? I wouldn't stay here for a minute if it wasn't for you.

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POLLY. Perhaps Susan wouldn't like to move away.

DICK. I tell you Susan hasn't got anything to do with it! I don't want to marry Susan and I won't. I want a girl with lots of "go" to her. Somebody who's got spirit—rides horseback, and dances and does things with a fellow—like you!

POLLY. [*Nods.*] I know. I've gotten used to you that way, too. But I suppose we have got to get over it when I go out west to live.

DICK. [*Firmly.*] Well, you're not going west to live, that's all.

POLLY. But how are we going to help it, Dick? Bobby Agnew would never come here to live just because we didn't want to be separated.

DICK. Who wants him to? The farther west he goes, the better. You don't want to marry the lobster, do you?

POLLY. Mercy—no.

DICK. Do you love any other fellow?

POLLY. N-o-o-o—I guess I don't. I can't think of any that I do.

DICK. Then you might just as well make up your mind to marry me—it'll save a lot of bother.

POLLY. Our mothers wouldn't hear of it!

DICK. They needn't. Why, the idea of your going west—what did they think I was going to do? Say—Poll, do you remember how we dared Bobby Agnew to ride old Reuben, and how we started Reub for the barn?

POLLY. Do I? There wasn't room for Bobby and Reuben to go through the barn door both to-

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gether, so Reub excused himself and took it alone.
[*Both laugh.*]

DICK. I don't know which was the most surprised—Bobby or Reuben!

POLLY. Remember how he said I was pretty once, and I hit him with the base-ball bat, and we thought I'd killed him?

DICK. Yes—the little liar!

POLLY. Dick!

DICK. Well, you weren't pretty—you were an ugly little mucker those days.

POLLY. [*Haughtily.*] Richard Henry Martin!

DICK. Present, Pretty Polly! Why, Polly, dearie, I never thought of it before, because I've always had you, but it's as plain as the nose on your face that if you married anybody else—I'd die!

POLLY. Oh, don't talk about it, Dickie.

DICK. Come to think of it, I began to feel that way years ago. Don't you remember how jealous I used to be of Reddy Brady. I thought you liked him better than you did me.

POLLY. But I didn't.

DICK. 'Member the time up in the old cherry tree when I proposed to you, Poll? I said: "If you like Reddy better than me, I'll shove you out of the tree and you'll break your neck!"

POLLY. And I said I didn't, just to save my neck.

DICK. And I said: "Polly, will you always be my sweetheart?" [*He faces her, holding out his arms.*]

POLLY. And I said—I remember perfectly—I

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said: "You bet!" [*She puts her head on his shoulder, he puts his arms about her. Enter Mrs. S. and Mrs. M.*]

MRS. S. [*Indignantly.*] Polly Starr—what does this mean?

DICK. It means that Polly and I have decided to get married, Aunt Martha.

MRS. M. How lovely!

MRS. S. How absurd—two babies, like you. Don't let us hear any more of this nonsense.

POLLY. Why not? We love each other more than—anything, and we may just as well get married now, when we can have fun together, as to wait until we're old.

MRS. S. Impossible! [*Aside to Mrs. M.*] Object—object!

MRS. M. [*Reluctantly.*] Richard, I must confess I am disappointed—

DICK. Now, mother, there has never been any girl in the world for me except Polly—so there's no use talking.

MRS. S. Polly, I am more hurt than I can say to think that when I expressed myself to you on the subject of your intimacy with Dick not twenty minutes ago, you were deceiving me, and planning to act contrary to my wishes.

POLLY. But, mother, I didn't know I was going to marry him twenty minutes ago. I've only known it about three minutes!

MRS. S. Polly!

POLLY. Dick, isn't that true? Did we ever think of it till about three minutes ago?

DICK. Never. And we never would have

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

thought of it then, if you and mother hadn't gotten so busy planning whom we were to marry. Of course, we weren't going to stand that, and the only way we could see out of it was to marry each other.

MRS. M. And that's the only reason?

MRS. S. Yes—*is* that the only reason?

DICK. Why, of course, we love each other besides, if you call that a reason.

MRS. S. It usually is considered a reason for marriage. That just shows how little either of you know about real love! I'm utterly unwilling to let Polly bind herself——

POLLY. Mother—I do love him—I love him better than anybody in the world, except you.

MRS. M. How long have you loved him that way, Polly?

POLLY. Well, it must be five minutes now, isn't it, Dick?

MRS. S. Polly Starr! [*She begins to weep.*]

POLLY. Well, I mean I always have, but I've only been thinking about it for five minutes. [*Mrs. S. sinks on couch at left, weeping audibly.*]

MRS. S. This is terrible—terrible!

MRS. M. Martha—I can't see why—— [*Mrs. S. goes to her, speaking in undertone.*]

MRS. S. Cry—cry, you goosie! [*Aloud.*] Dick is no match for Polly——

MRS. M. Any more than Polly is a match for Dick!

DICK. [*Hotly.*] Mother!

MRS. M. [*Begins to weep.*] Don't tell me she

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is half as promising a wife for you as Susan would be—Susan's an excellent housekeeper.

POLLY. [*Hotly.*] Well, I must say, Aunt Agnes, I never expected this from you. How do you know I wouldn't be a good housekeeper, if I tried. [*Mrs. M. shakes head, sinks on chair at right and weeps.*]

MRS. S. Dick has no talent for business!

POLLY. [*Angrily.*] Mother, I will not stand here and listen to you abuse my future husband. I—I—— [*Polly begins to weep. Dick in despair, looks at three weeping women.*]

DICK. I declare, you do surprise me. All the years you two have been friends and here, when your only children want to get married—when anybody'd think you'd be jumping for joy—you cry and take on as if Polly and I were dead! [*Two mothers exchange hasty glance, then resume weeps.*] I'll not stand for it—having Polly pestered to death. Come along, dear, we'll go out in the garden and talk it over quietly.

POLLY. [*Sobbing.*] Oh, Dick—you were awfully saucy—but it was fine. [*They go out. The two mothers rush into each other's arms at center.*]

MRS. S. Oh—Agnes, isn't it perfect? [*Kisses her.*]

MRS. M. Yes, and weren't they dear—bless their hearts? [*Kisses her.*]

MRS. S. I was so proud of Dick—he was so manly—and fine!

MRS. M. [*Wipes her eyes.*] And wasn't Polly adorable when she looked up at him?

DRAMATIC EPISODES.

MRS. S. Yes, that's the best part of it—they really are in love with each other. Our dream of years has come to pass, dear friend. [*They sit on couch, hand in hand.*]

MRS. M. Yes, thank God—and the children. Shall we go abroad, as we've always planned, and leave them alone a while?

MRS. S. Yes, let's carry out all our cherished details.

MRS. M. [*Laughs.*] It was so clever of you to think of Bobby Agnew and Susan!

MRS. S. It happened to work—and "all's well that ends well!" [*Enter Dick and Polly, hand in hand, sorrow written on every feature. They come forward and stand before their parents.*]

DICK. [*Sadly.*] Mother, Aunt Martha, Polly and I have decided that since you feel so terribly about this matter, we have no right to ruin your lives to gain our own happiness.

MRS. M. [*Starts up.*] But, my dear boy, it's my happiness to——

POLLY. [*Sadly.*] We see it in a new light now—it would be too selfish, Aunt Agnes—don't tempt us to do it.

MRS. S. But, Polly, I won't let you sacrifice yourself this way for me——

DICK. No, Aunt Martha, you and mother have made us see that it is asking too much, so Polly and I are going to—part!

POLLY. [*Gulps.*] Yes—to part!

MRS. M. [*In alarm.*] But where are you going, Dick?

DICK. [*Wearily.*] I don't know, mother——

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what difference does it make? [*Polly sniffs and goes up stage.*]

MRS. M. [*Her head on his right shoulder.*]
Oh, Dick—don't go—for your mother's sake!

DICK. [*Firmly.*] I must go, mother.

MRS. S. [*Her head on his left shoulder.*]
Don't go, Dick, for Polly's sake! [*Polly bursts out laughing. All turn and look at her.*] Polly, what does this mean?

MRS. M. Dick—explain!

DICK. [*Laughing.*] Well, I rubbered through the window as we went out, and saw you two tackle each other at center!

POLLY. So we decided on a bluff, too——

MRS. S. You bad, ungrateful children! [*Polly throws arms about her mother.*]

POLLY. You wicked, scheming parents! [*Dick solemnly takes Polly's hand, leads her front, with a flourish.*]

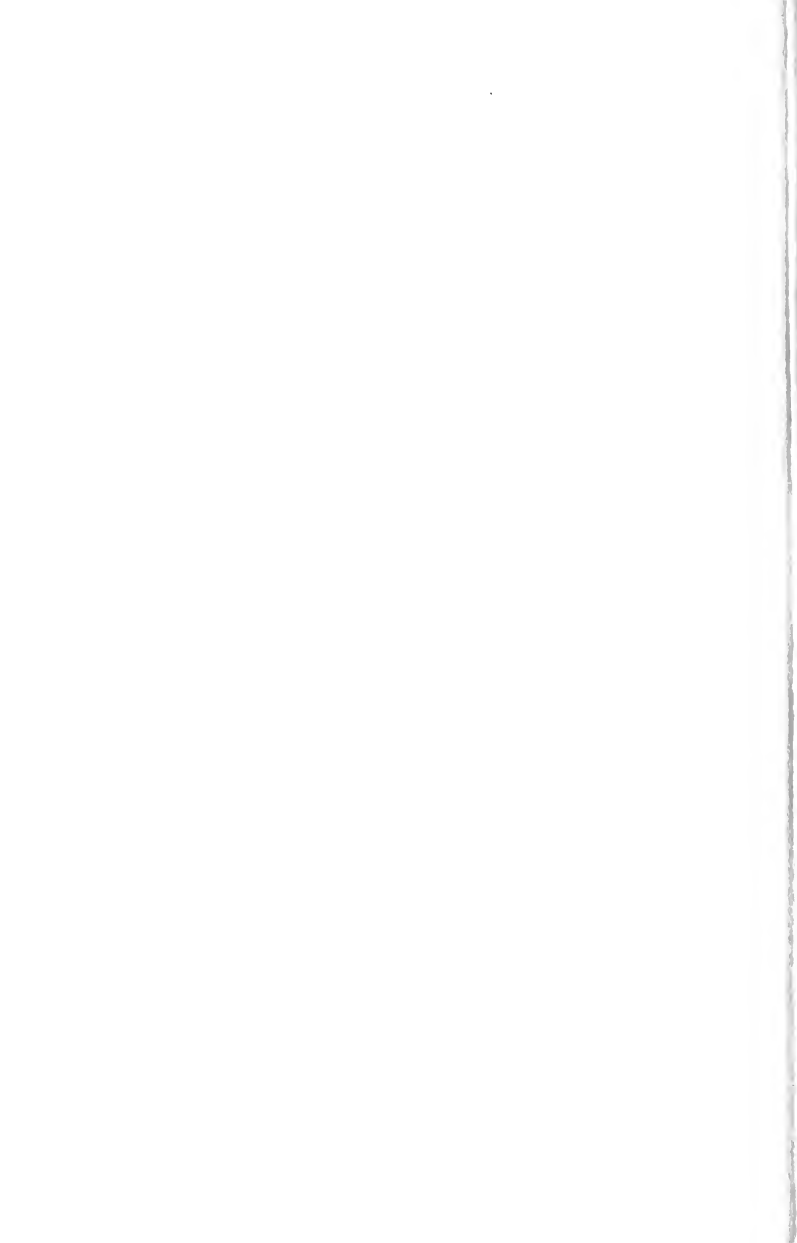
DICK. Now, dear ladies, that this farce comedy of yours has drawn to a close, Polly and I would like your blessing. [*They kneel before the mothers.*]

MRS. M. Health and happiness to you, my blessed children;

MRS. S. And may love be always young!

CURTAIN.





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